WRIGHTSCAPES

THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

by
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THE COVER: (L) The Wizard of Taliesin c. 1940, as he steps out of one of his several redesigned roadsters. © Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation. (R-top) Birdseye romantic view beyond high walls of the Cheney cottage, Oak Park IL. Designed in the early 1890s while Wright was with Louis Sullivan; was not built until 1903. This view today would show a hot tub on the front terrace far forward of the neighboring set-back line. (R-bottom) The M.M. Smith 1946 Usonian residence in Bloomfield Hills MI. In superb condition, from lot line to lot line. Designed and sited by Frank Lloyd Wright, it was landscaped by Thomas Church and enlarged in 1970 by Taliesin Associated Architects. One of only four sites rated a perfect "10.0!"

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Encouragement to pursue still another avenue of the phenomenon that is Frank Lloyd Wright (FLLW) originally was provided during a videotaped interview session at an open house celebrating the restoration of the Wright-designed Auldbrass Plantation (Yamasee, SC) by Mr. and Mrs. Seamour Shavin, original client-owners of the only Wright-designed residence in Tennessee. When research showed that no landscape architect ever had made an in-depth study of Wright's landscapes, I drafted a proposal to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to meet a September, 1989 deadline. Thus began a research project that has given me two of the most pleasurable, if intense, years of my academic life.

Special thanks is given to:

- All the owners who opened their homes and their hearts to me, without whose gracious and hospitable cooperation this research could not have been conducted. Many of these very special people have accepted me as their "friend," with several becoming correspondents answering followup questions and keeping me informed of new discoveries regarding their landscapes. At the risk of offending some, I again must single out Seamour and Gerte Shavin, and add Katherine Jacobs, Christine Weisblat, Meg Klinkow (as Research Director, FLLW Home and Studio, as well as homeowner), Maya Moran, John and Betty Tilton, and Roland Reisley for going far beyond the call of duty--and, in advance, for the help they are not yet aware will be asked of them for Phase III of this research.

- Friends in High Places, who wrote wonderful letters of support for both this and the next phase of the project: Bill Swain, FASLA, Landscape Architect for Fallingwater; Grady Clay, Author-Director of the Gazatteer Project; and Larry Sommer, Director of the Montana Historical Society.

- The Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy (BC), whose members welcomed me at their organizational meeting in 1989 at Taliesin West, and invited me to share my preliminary findings during their second conference held at Grand Rapid, Michigan. Meeting and getting to know so many homeowners on a first name basis not only facilitated research and quickened the pace of this project, but also significantly contributed to my own personal enjoyment of what could have become a tedious process. Carla Lind, Executive Director, during a videotaped interview, provided a comprehensive overview of the organization, of her personal experiences, and valuable bits of information--*just* when needed.

- William Allin Storrer, Ph.D., who provided a significant contribution to architectural history when he published *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (1974), and through the updated second edition (1978). When I discovered this catalog (bible?) at the bookstore of the Wisconsin Historical Society in 1980, I immediately was able to clean out files, clippings, and maps I had saved for more than thirty years. When I discovered the "green book," *A Guide to Extant Structures*, during a visit to Taliesin exactly ten years later, I was able to remark my road atlasses, thus allowing me to conserve on gasoline. Still later, during a telephone conversation with Dr. Storrer, the *Frank Lloyd Wright Update* came into the conversation. This tri-partite kit of materials is never far from reach and has saved years, as well as miles, during this research. Hopefully, his new book will be in publication in time for my next adventure.

- John H. Howe and the late William Wesley Peters exhibited interest and encouragement since my early Taliesin visits in the late 1940s, when I was an unofficial "student" of Frank Lloyd Wright. Never will I forget my last personal interaction with Wes Peters in August, 1989, when he took time for a brief but revealing videotaped interview and took me on a tour into the inner sanctum of Taliesin; nor will I forget the wisdom of his words at the B. C. Conference at Taliesin West in March, 1989. A telephone conversation with Jack Howe, as recent as September 1991, provided sorely needed information to fit together some missing links as this report was being drafted.

- Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, whom I have not yet met, is Director of The Frank Lloyd Wright Archives and author or editor of numerous books, the most outstanding being the twelve-volume *Monograph* and the eight-volume *Selected Houses* (A.D.A. EDITA, Tokyo), with the magnificent photographs by Yukio Futagawa. I have read and reread all of these works from cover-to-cover, with each reading finding new gems of information relating to Wright's landscapes--some of which I disagree with strongly. Knowing how inaccessible most of this work was, only a few years ago, I feel fortunate to have access to such rich resources at this particular point in time.

- Indira Berndtson, Administrator Historic Studies, has been most helpful during my visit to the FLLW Archives and in answering my many inquiries, and Oscar Munoz of the Archives staff prepared the first printout of site plans that heralded the onset of this research.

- Cornelia Brierly, landscape architect with Taliesin Architects, has been of more assistance than she perhaps realizes. Although her videotaped interview was cut short by the program scheduling of the 1989 B. C. Conference, she provided me with some leads that no one else could have, to guide my research over the next year-and-one-half. Another Taliesin Fellowship staffer to be recognized is Mary Frances Nemtin, who has done such a fantastic job with the gardens at both Taliesins and provided me with a list of perennials currently growing around the complex.

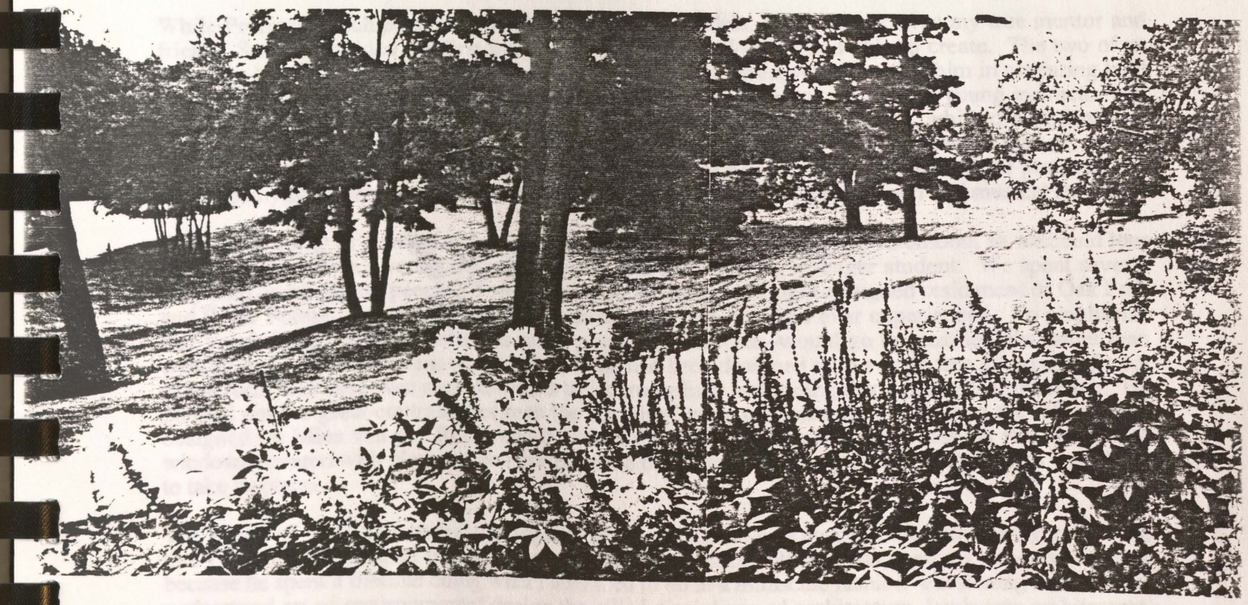
- Eric Lloyd Wright , architect, son of Lloyd and grandson of FLLW, has provided me with encouragement, an excellent letter of support to the NEA, and invaluable tips on the direction of this research. It was a lucky break for me that we were introduced during the festivities at Auldbrass only minutes before the Shavins gave me the idea that I might even consider such an ambitious project.

- David Bell, Martha Neri, Christopher Vernon, and Ken Peters--who became involved with the project by chance, and my good fortune. David Bell furnished photos and copious notes (as only a landscape architect could) for three midwest houses I have been unable to visit or revisit in recent years. Martha Neri, a volunteer expert-historian/researcher took the chance of sharing valuable notes on the landscape delights built into the Darwin D. Martin Residence, which she will use in forthcoming publications. Chris Vernon brought to my attention documentation on Walter Burley Griffin's key role as landscape designer in the Oak Park studio. Ken Peters, my old Air Force buddy and "best man" at our wedding, was the person called upon to obtain information on the Mossberg and DeRhodes houses, an assignment which led him to the libraries of both South Bend and Notre Dame; renewing a friendship that had lapsed for several decades was the real bonus, however.

- The University of Georgia, while not an official co-sponsor of this "individual" N.E.A. project, neverthless made it possible for me to go far beyond the "approximately twenty-five sites" estimated in the grant application. Darrel G. Morrison, Dean of the School of Environmental Design, and Dr. Joseph W. Whorton, Jr., Director of the Institute of Community and Area Development, each were able to justify contributing some of my academic and public service time and matching portions of the N.E.A. funds with travel allotments, during a time of limited resources. Support also was provided through staff assistance, namely Marsha Parks, who handled the brunt of correspondence, questionnaires, and other day-to-day duties, in addition to an already overtaxed work load.

- Professors Catherine Howett, John Linley, and William Mann, colleagues in the School of Environmental Design. Catherine was most helpful in providing a "hard-nosed" critique of my grant application. All three listened patiently when I returned from Wright house-hunting expeditions with exciting (I thought) stories to relate. Since all are recognized expert historians and authors of landscape architectural history, I am privileged not only to be their colleague, but to have had their support as listeners, readers, and critics.

- Berdeana Aguar, my wife, chief critic, re-writer, ghost co-author, proofreader, speller, computer technician, editor, sometimes navigator and chauffeur, but always best friend, and my soul-mate on that first visit to Taliesin 43 years ago. She shared a Prairie-style house with me and our first four children in Springfield, Illinois, where we first identified with the true meaning of organic architecture and living with nature. We expanded upon this identification by twice becoming closely involved with newly discovered creativity only possible when using organic principles in building our own special environments, during which processes we became ardent devotees of Frank Lloyd Wright.



Environmental Ambiance of the Taliesin Fellowship Complex. Spring Green, Wisconsin. August, 1989

PREFACE

Immediately following World War II, while attending the University of Illinois, I first studied architecture, then landscape architecture--finally obtaining my terminal degree in city planning. I had several role models within the school: Professors Stanley White and Karl Lohmann, and our young Instructor fresh from Harvard School of Design: Hideo Sasaki.

Field trips were part of the educational process--for the recent GIs in particular, most of whom could sit only so long in a classroom. Karl Lohmann led a field trip to Chicago to see the planned, post-war developments just then getting underway, before he took us to Riverside, the granddaddy of planned communities designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. Here, we saw many prairie-style homes, including Wright's landmark Tomek and Coonley homes--then both in advanced stages of decay. We were shocked at the crumbling pavement, dirty pool, and broken urns at the vacant Coonley estate and wondered what was to become of the abandoned gardens, which we were told had been designed by landscape architect, Jens Jensen. The gardener's house seemed to be falling down, and the stable was filled with stacks of broken or very dirty windows. We didn't know then that the value of such windows later would be reason enough to destroy whole buildings or that, after more than forty years had passed, I would photograph this same art glass, beautifully restored and installed, while revisiting this transformed landmark; but that's the "fable of the stable" (Case Study S-104).

Stan White led a field trip to Wisconsin, which included many Frank Lloyd Wright (FLLW) buildings as well as a delightful day at Taliesin, Wright's home in Spring Green, Wisconsin--where we were entertained by the musical talents of Mr. and Mrs. Wright, their daughter, and several apprentices and their spouses. It was a magical place, and I gave some serious thought to joining the Fellowship, but learned that the GI Bill was not then approved for a non-accredited, non-degree program.

While Professors Lohmann and White were my role models, Hideo Sasaki was my true mentor and friend. Sasaki provided my first insight into the illusions Wright was able to create. The two of us spent the 1947-48 Christmas school holiday in the Chicago area, where I aided him in preparing land use studies for the central area of Wilmette. Two Christmas seasons earlier, the young instructor and his family were living in a detention camp for Japanese-American citizens, while the student was studying architecture by taking an Army correspondence course and waiting to return home from the once Japanese-held island of Tinian; as a crew member of a B-29 photo-reconnaissance plane, he did not drop anything over Sasaki's ancestral home except parachutes carrying food and medical supplies.

Sasaki had a way of starting early and completing the consulting tasks by afternoon, so we could tour places of interest to a young design instructor and only-slightly-younger student. We spent several very cold evenings as "peeping Toms," trying to see into the Wright-designed residences of Oak Park and River Forest--the most beautiful and unusual residences I had ever experienced. To emphasize that Frank Lloyd Wright--unlike so many post-war architects--would go to great lengths rather than destroy a tree, he showed me one residence that had been designed with a large tree growing right out of the roof, and there was a stable with a tree purposefully protruding through the roof overhang. He pointed out the great contrasts between the "floating" glass architectural building on the IIT campus, designed by Mies van der Rohe, and the nearby Wright-designed Robie House--at that time, with windows covered with plywood and graffiti and a billboard citing the high-rise building that was slated to take its place.

The winter of 1947-48 whetted my appetite to see and experience every Frank Lloyd Wright structure that I could, and this goal has been my avocation ever since. Wright has been my unequivocal idol, because he spent a lifetime doing what I also tried to do in a miniscule fashion--combining into the little understood art of environmental design the allied disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture, and town and regional planning. Diverted by other subjects and motivations over the years, my special interest in Wright never has waned.

I. INTRODUCTION

I began this project influenced by a personal forty-year infatuation with the works of Frank Lloyd Wright. Having driven past, walked around, and photographed maybe three dozen designs--several while still under construction, I could see no wrong. The occasional Wright building open to the public which I toured had been in excellent condition, and a few endangered specimens--such as the Robie House, the Coonley Estate, and Auldbrass Plantation that I had photographed in various stages of deterioration--had been painstakingly and beautifully restored. And I had been thoroughly indoctrinated through Wright's well-publicized philosophical statements on *organic architecture* and the *nature* of the site:

"By organic architecture, I mean an architecture that developes from within outward in harmony with the conditions of its being, as distinguished from one that is applied from without." [1]

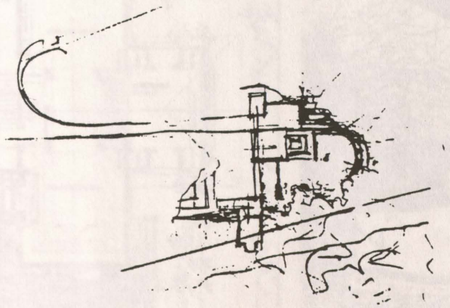
"Site, Structure, furnishings--decoration too, planting as well--all these become as one in organic architecture." [2]

"The essence of organic building is space, space flowing outward, space flowing inward." [2]

"Building is an organism only if in accord outside with inside and both with the character and nature of its purpose, process, place and time. It will then incorporate the nature of the site, of the methods by which it is constructed, and finally the whole--from grade to coping, ground to skyline--will be becoming to its purpose. This is all merely the common sense of organic architecture." [2]

"When organic architecture is properly carried out, no landscape is ever outraged by it but is always developed by it." [3]

"With organic architecture, man is a noble feature of his own ground, integral as trees, the sculptor--streams, and the ribs of rocks that are our hills." [4]



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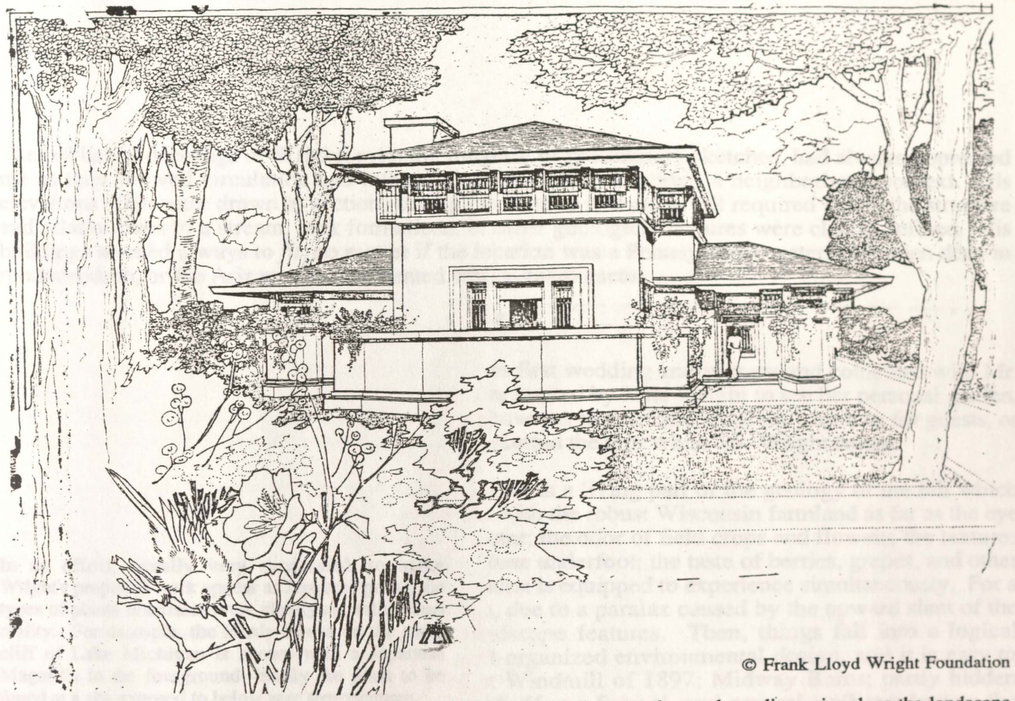
Wright's earliest thumbnail sketch plan for the Coonley estate reveals his concern for the larger environment of this section of Riverside, Illinois, and for the greenway along the Des Plaines River.

1 *Architectural Record*, March 1908.
2 *A Testament*, New York: Horizon Press, 1957.
3 *An Organic Architecture: The Architecture of Democracy*. London, 1919.
4 *When Democracy Builds*, University of Chicago Press, 1945.



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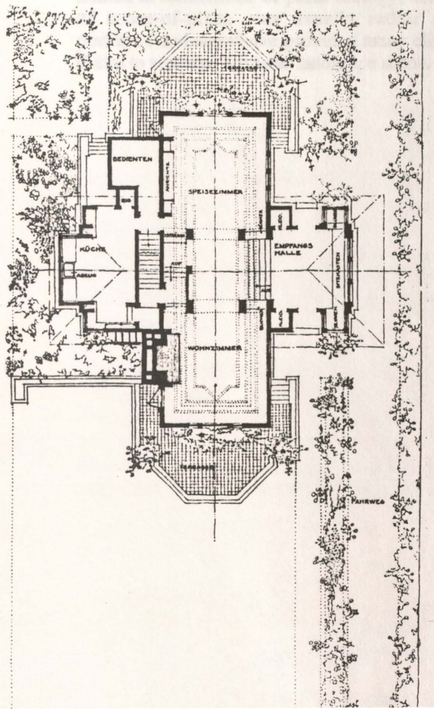
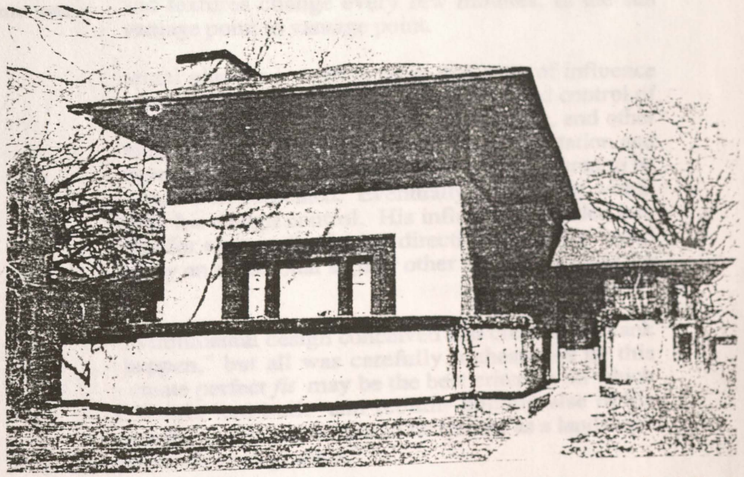
Wright's super-talented illustrator, Marion Mahony, made his Prairie houses almost three dimensional, as the landscape of the site and even the plantings and wildlife on the property or across the street made the viewer forget that the drawing was a one-dimensional piece of paper.





K.C. DeRhodes Residence in South Bend Indiana, as it looked before restoration was instigated. The 1906 structure was in a bad state of disrepair as a social club headquarters, prior to its purchase by a professor from Indiana University at South Bend.

Source: University of Notre Dame Libra

The published drawings of Wright, even the roughest of preliminary sketches, had always impressed me as they showed circulation and interrelationships, such as within a neighborhood context. His elevations often were drawn as sections through the site so that cut or fill required below the structure and relationships to a stream, rock formations, or other geological features were clearly defined. His buildings seemed always to *fit*, no matter if the location was a Pennsylvania waterfall hidden deep in rhododendron, or the Arizona desert accented with saguaro cactus.

In an effort, usually very successful, to make Wright's proposed work appear as Japanese prints, the types of plants illustrated were clearly art, rather than reality. For example, the Hardy House on the steep cliff of Lake Michigan is shown with a Japanese Magnolia in the foreground--hardly the plant to be found at a site exposed to below zero temperatures.

Of course, neither Mr. Wright nor Ms. Mahony were trained in horticulture or plant ecology, but the image of sense-of-place was usually rather accurately portrayed and must have provided many clients with a desire to replicate the total landscape scene.

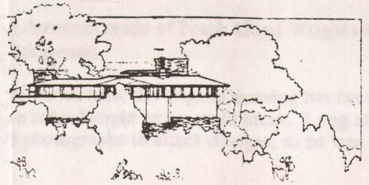
place.

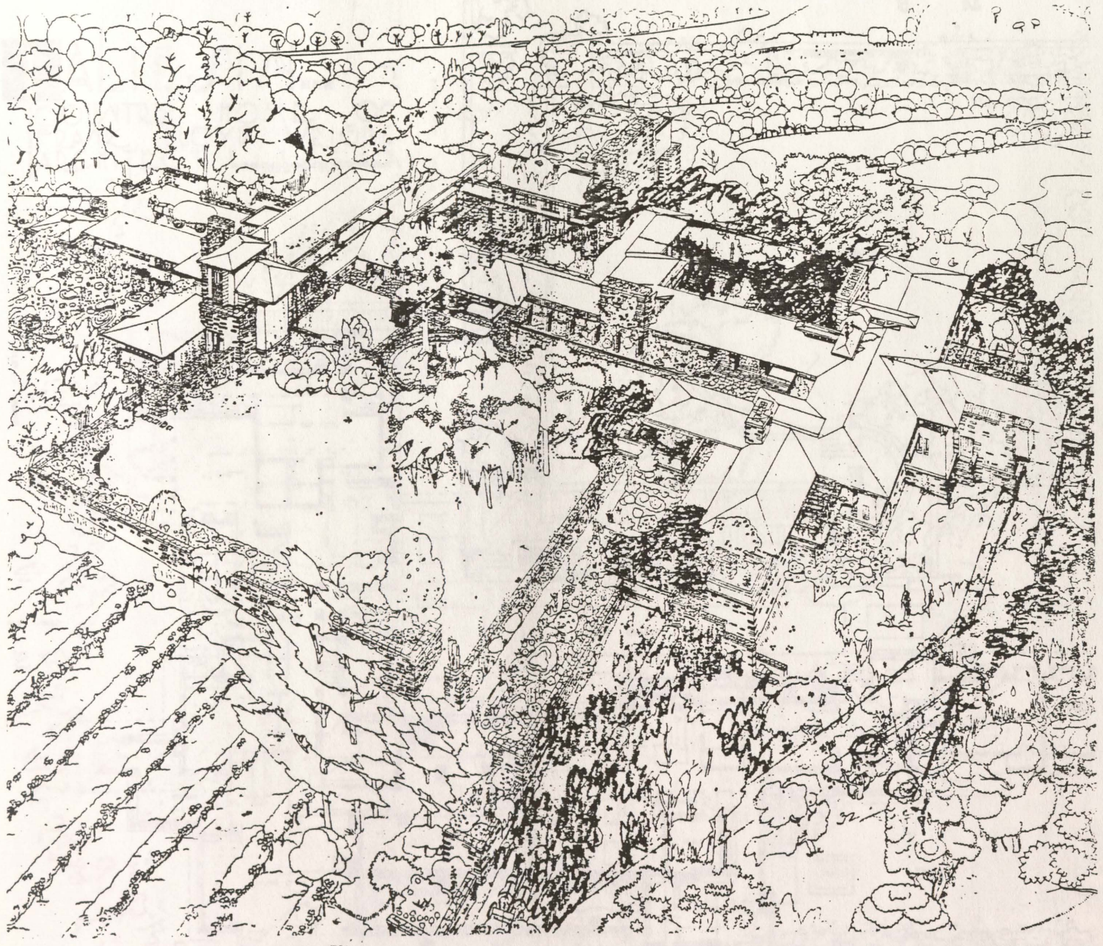
ur first wedding anniversary and coincided with Mr. re invited by Mrs. Wright to see her personal garden, have yet to see. She apparently took us for guests, or scorted the tour while Mr. Wright rested.

esin is a living part of the geology of the hill which ; with the robust Wisconsin farmland as far as the eye ater; the odor of field crops and flowers; the textures tone underfoot; the taste of berries, grapes, and other rson is equipped to experience simultaneously. For a ı, due to a paralax caused by the upward slant of the ıdscape features. Then, things fall into a logical l-organized environmental design, and it is easy to t Windmill of 1897; Midway Barns; partly hidden ide Home School, and several staff residences; the give more milk, but Wright felt their color was not as nd the wide Wisconsin River. The magnificent man- ; and valley of the "almighty Jones's" and the colors, and textures change every few minutes, as the sun vantage point to vantage point.

ıental planner is evidenced in this zone of influence s that he lived there, he gradually acquired control of e power poles, overhead wires, billboards, and other ning land uses, such as a gasoline service station and rious fires--and even farm houses he considered to be -place were relocated. Eventually, everything within nder his design control. His influence extended into rive for many miles in any direction and enjoy broad ı only an occasional sign or other intrusion to mar the

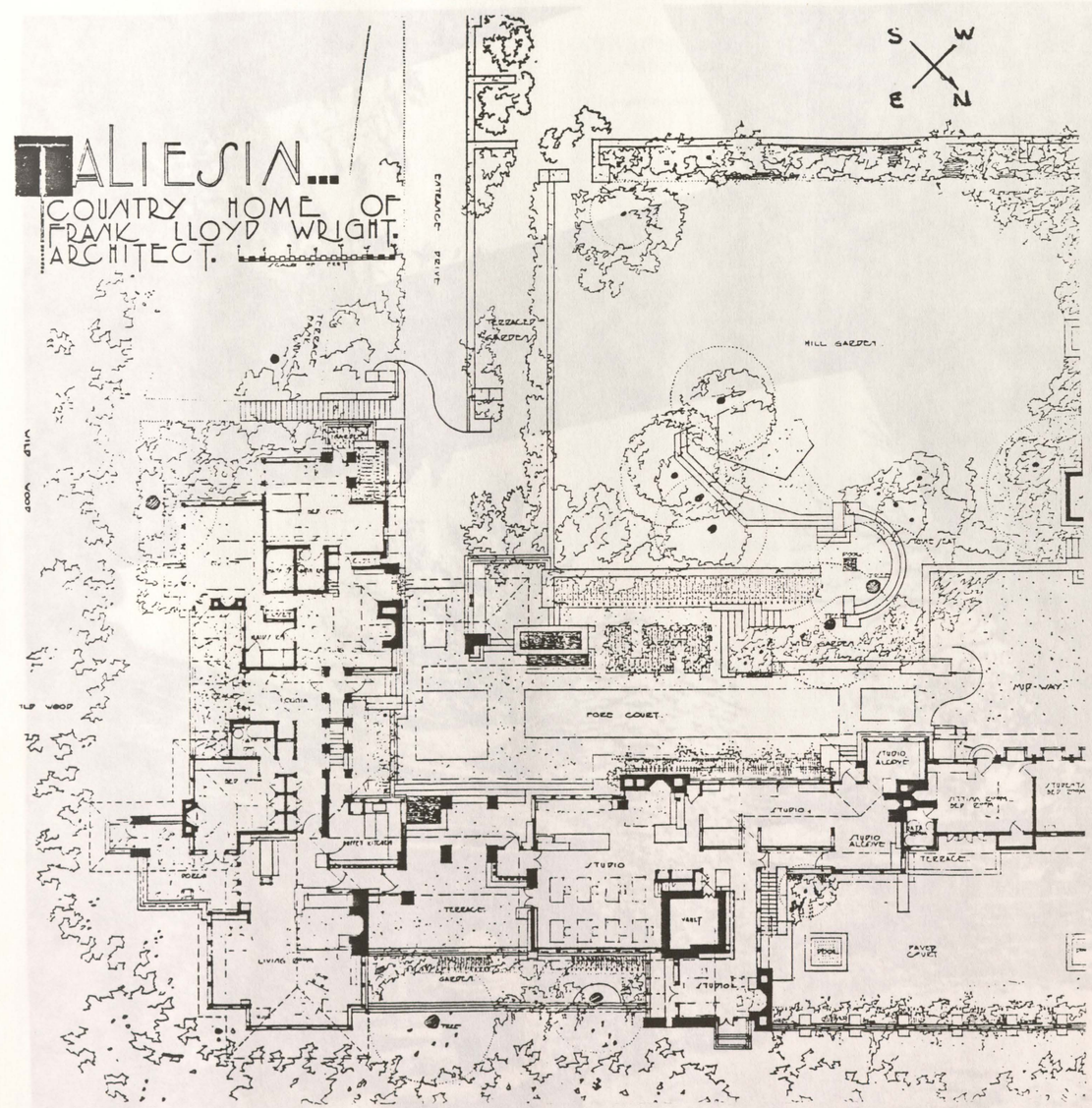
environmental design conceived and created by Frank happen," but all was carefully orchestrated by this create perfect *fit* may be the best criterion on which Wright had built--and rebuilt--nothing else in his consin, would entitle him to be known as a landscape environmental planner."





Taliesin. One of the most elaborate of several perspective drawings made of Frank Lloyd Wright's famous home near Spring Green, Wisconsin. The Wisconsin River is in the background.

Although the site never may have been as heavily planted as shown here, the original drawing has been gone over with a soft pencil to suggest even more plantings in certain areas--a habit Wright never could break. Long after buildings were finished, he still would go back over original drawings and photographs to effect changes, as he was inspired with new ideas for improving on his own designs.

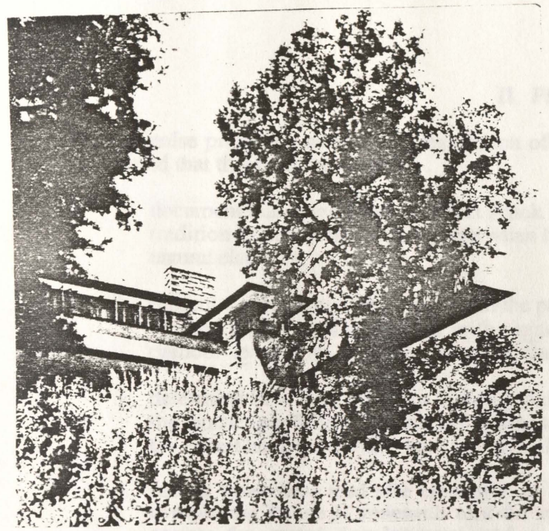


Taliesin, Partial Plan--37,289 sq. ft. building / 29,404 sq. ft. gardens, terraces, and courts

Taliesin is the crown jewel of Frank Lloyd Wright treasures, and the finest example of his theory of organic architecture. This greatest of all Wright's personal experiments was never completed, yet it appears to have been a part of its site forever. Like the FLLW Home and Studio in Oak Park, Illinois and Taliesin West in Arizona, Taliesin was in a constant stage of flux. This landscape plan was considerably simplified in later years, when the main entry was changed.

Many have asked, "where does the house leave off, and the garden begin?" The question could be reversed just as well. Like the chicken and the egg.....which came first, the architecture or the landscape architecture? Could any professionally trained landscape architect improve upon this plan?

"The architecture was something to see the landscape through," Walter L. Creese



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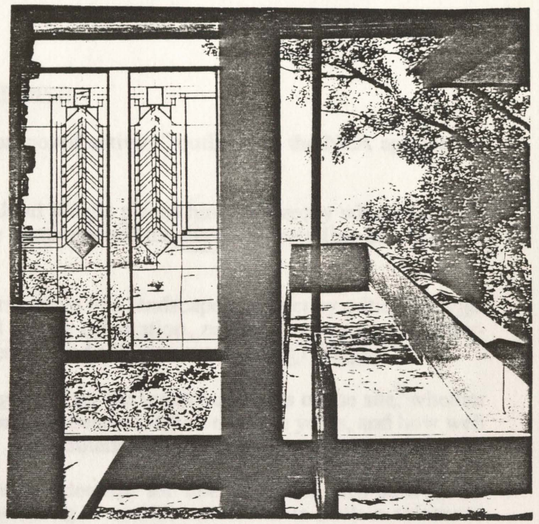

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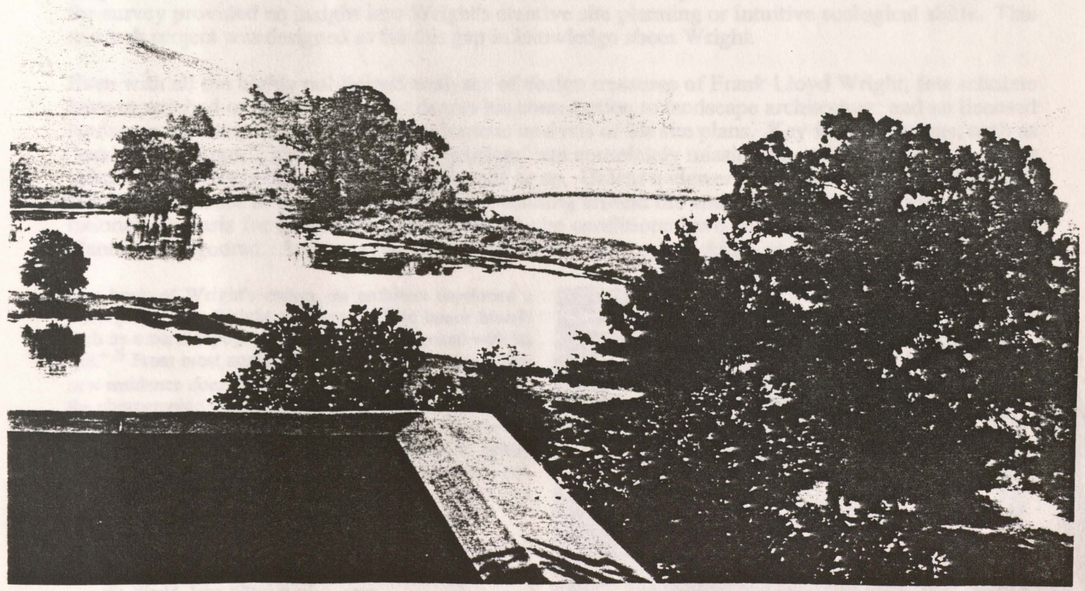
The lyrical domain of the Wizard of Taliesin. "*Of* the hill, not *on* it" is how Wright in 1911 planned Taliesin, and over an eighteen-year period built two later versions of his "shining brow." When the author, a student of Wright who never physically studied under him, first toured the estate in 1948, the cantilevered birdwalk terrace had not yet been added. Wes Peters personally escorted him out to the end of the terrace in August, 1989, for a breathtaking sensory experience as the setting sun did magical things with the "watergarden" below, the Wisconsin River to the north, the low hills all around, and the immense red-white-and-blue sky overhead.



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II. PREMISE

The premise presented under the "description of proposed activity" outlined in the NEA application purported that this research would:

1. document that preeminent architect Frank Lloyd Wright placed himself directly within the great tradition of landscape architecture when he demonstrated his masterful handling of space and natural elements;

2. present a new view of his work from the perspective of a landscape architect by critiquing what worked and what didn't work with regard to site orientation, energy conservation, indoor-outdoor space flow, use of native plant materials, and adjustment to current lifestyles;

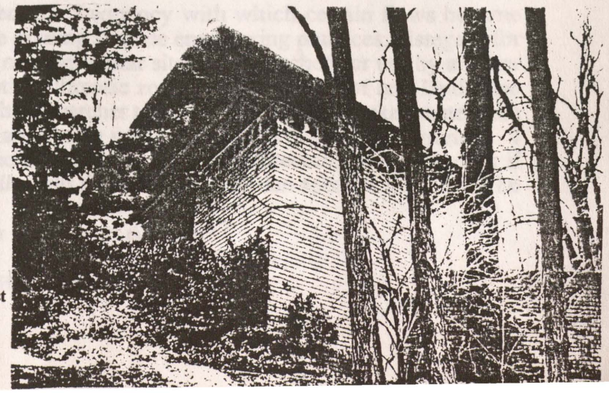
3. determine how well Wright's building designs reflect the unique qualities of the site, whether the landscapes follow his original designs or have been modified over the years, and how well the extant landscapes rate--both functionally and aesthetically; and,

4. record interviews and site elements on 8mm videotape for use as a reference source for completing Phase II research and for upcoming Phase III research, as both a reference source for script development and a source of raw footage to rough-edit together a storyboard in preparation to seek funding for the production of a professional video documentary.

Despite the plethora of books and articles on the philosophy and works of Frank Lloyd Wright, only limited information exists on how well his structures created a sense of place, solved the environmental problems of clients and sites, or how adaptable to late twentieth century lifestyles later generations have found his residential environments to be. Over the years, clients of several Wright-designed showplaces have been interviewed, and a few clients have written books about their personal experiences. In a 1971 survey, thirty-three original clients were interviewed on a wide range of subjects but, while there were enthusiastic comments on the way the houses were sited, the nature of the survey provided no insight into Wright's creative site planning or intuitive ecological skills. This research project was designed to fill this gap in knowledge about Wright.

Even with all the highly publicized analyses of design treasures of Frank Lloyd Wright, few scholars have researched or addressed to any degree his contribution to landscape architecture; and no licensed landscape architect has conducted a systematic analysis of his site plans. Key words or terms, such as "landscape design," "site planning," or "gardens" are completely missing from the indices of books or articles on Wright written over the past decade or so. Unless a viewer evaluates and fully understands the *fit* of the house to the land, by physically walking around the entire building, then there can be no rationale or basis for determining if the natural site conditions have been responded to by good site planning, or ignored. Architects and historians seldom study such things on site.

In a book of Wright's essays, an architect captioned a photograph of a Wright residence: "This house blends with its natural topography and is well integrated with its site." [5] From most angles, the beautiful, maintained-like-new residence *does* integrate well with its site. However, the photographic view (right) is the one public facade and gives the impression of an imposing castle tower--an unfortunate perception for a house well scaled to family living. The house was rotated some 90° when staked out, according to the owner, which may have caused this monotypical design feature. (See Case Study S-332)



5 Quote/Photo by Patrick J. Meehan, AIA, from Truth Against the World, John Wiley & Sons, 1987.

III. OVERVIEW

"Nature has its plan. Everything has its plan." [6]

As the research and critique evolved, it became apparent that Wright and his assistants did not always discover *nature's plan*. When Wright and his apprentices went against the grain of the land, the results were not as successful as when designing *with* nature was the order. While a large percent of Wright's work are national treasures, when some 1150 works are designed within one lifetime, not *all* will be built and not *all* necessarily will follow every dictum espoused by the master.

The research and evaluations conducted to date have provided an insight the researcher had not envisioned at the onset of the research. In summarizing the results, it was determined that in only fifty-nine percent of the landscapes evaluated did the design, implementation, and current conditions provide good evidence of Frank Lloyd Wright's contribution to excellence in landscape architecture. This was much lower than the researcher had assumed prior to the project. Rather than concentrating on the best known and special Wright-designed treasures, such as Taliesin, Taliesin West, and Fallingwater--where Wright's intuitive design skills were given free rein and limited very little through financial constraints--the purpose of this study was to determine how well Frank Lloyd Wright was able to site and landscape his *moderate and low-priced* residential designs, which constitute a significant number of his buildings located all over America.

Of the approximate 300 extant Wright-designed *occupied* residences, 132 were visited at least casually by the researcher. Letters and telephone appointments were helpful in obtaining excellent cooperation and asssistance from owners. In only one case was the researcher "chased off" (with a big dog unleashed for emphasis), believed to be due to the non-arrival of a letter of introduction. Seventy-three residences were evaluated in detail, with tours and interviews given by forty homeowners--twelve being First Families (original clients). Two of the First Families, no longer living in Wright-designed houses, still were willing to discuss their former environments. Twenty-two First Families, who could not be interviewed personally, responded through a written questionnaire. These numbers comprise 65% of Wright's surviving First Families, most of whom are now in their 70s and 80s, with two aged 93. Evaluations of these seventy-three landscapes were validated and supported through a two-page checklist, still photography, and videography on 8mm camcorder. The ages of those interviewed ranged from thirty-something to the mid-seventies, and their tenure of occupancy ranged from 1 to 52 years. Interview durations ranged from one-and-one-half to seven hours, and followed a standard one-and-one-half pages of questions, with room for much latitude for First Families who might wish to reminisce and/or read from correspondence with Wright.

Additionally, plans for the sites of Wright's last one-hundred residential designs were evaluated, interpreted, and critiqued much as would be done in a professional landscape architecture studio, or during a "desk crit" with a student of environmental design.

While my high esteem for Wright never lessened, the frequency with which certain flaws became apparent--inaccurate siting decisions; questionable grading and site engineering practices; disregard for solar orientation, as plans prepared for one client on a particular site were switched for use by another client on another site and, in some cases, in another climatic zone; a general lack of real landscape plans; and examples of ecological errors--caused the researcher to further question and take greater care in documenting those "building with nature" examples so many authors have taken for granted. I began to wonder if Wright practiced what he preached with the organic architecture he espoused, or if the Wizard of Taliesin hadn't sometimes created *illusions* that he and Wrightian apostles *believed* to be true.

"Is it an illusion, or does it just appear that way?" [7]

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6 Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Natural House*, New York: Horizon Press, 1957.

7 Frank and Ernest comic strip. © NEA, Inc., 1991.

Environmental Ambiance

It is difficult to define "ambiance," "character," or "atmosphere" as these descriptive terms apply to residences designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Unless the environs have been physically and emotionally experienced, it really would not be possible for the uninformed to truly comprehend what most contributed to Wright's preeminence: his ability, when he performed up to his highest potential, to exploit to the fullest an entire palette of sensory techniques to make his architecture become part of the total environment of the site.

Wright deplored the architectural designs of his day that trapped clients in what he termed as "boxes." He personally abhored air conditioning and went to great lengths in his designs to bring into play natural air movement, using the principals of convection to trap cool air and release hotter air, or reverse the process, depending upon the season. He also employed various devices throughout the design process, for even the most basic of his structures, to bring the outdoors inside and to visually expand interior space by extending the view to the outside:

- To heighten the environmental ambiance on sunny or foggy days and to permit casement windows to be left open during rainy weather for enjoyment of the sounds and smells of nature, Wright introduced broad overhanging eaves that served as an umbrella over banks of casement windows.

- Aware that a darkened interior was inherent with broad overhangs and cantilevered porches, he chose to reflect light back inside by painting the ceilings of these appurtances in light colors. The banks of clerestory windows accessed natural daylight from all sides, serving as a "lantern" to fill the interior with a soft indirect glow. The clerestory windows also served as a visual artistic feature, inviting the eye to watch the everchanging patterns created on walls, floors, and ceilings as the sun followed its trajectory course throughout the seasons.

- Broad glass expanses of floor-to-ceiling French doors permitted glimpses of clouds, sky, treetops, birds, and other outdoor movement--to make even his most moderate residences *special* places where the outdoors was always in sight and in mind. In his Usonian houses, the art glass and colored prisms of the Prairie House windows were replaced by plywood "fretted" boards, an inexpensive material, to create much the same effect and provide privacy. His unique mitered glass corner windows provided unimpeded views to the exterior environment.

- Through the introduction of terraces, porches, balconies, and other architectural extensions, Wright encouraged outdoor activities and made it easy, even mandatory, for his clients to leave the enclosed house and enter a partly sheltered space for dining, entertaining, children's play, reading the newspaper, airing the bedding, or simply checking out the day's weather.

Wright understood better than other architects of his time that ambience cannot be "tacked on" or applied, like "landscaping," with plantings that serve only a cosmetic purpose. He introduced the indoor-outdoor integration of architecture and landscape architecture a full half-century prior to the American outdoor living practices credited to Southern California following World War II. Adaptations made to many of the Wright designed residences provide ample evidence that many current owner occupants still today find these spaces to be an integral part of their daily lives: children's toys strewn about, cushions and open books temporarily left behind, portable barbeque equipment awaiting use, and in one case a hot tub has been installed on a famous Prairie-type terrace which extends far forward of the setback line for neighboring residences.

Landscape architecture, except in relatively few special situations, is the single-most missing link needed to consummate the total environmental ambiance of original intent within the restoration, rehabilitation, rebuilding, or adaptive reuse of Frank Lloyd Wright designed structures.

Signature

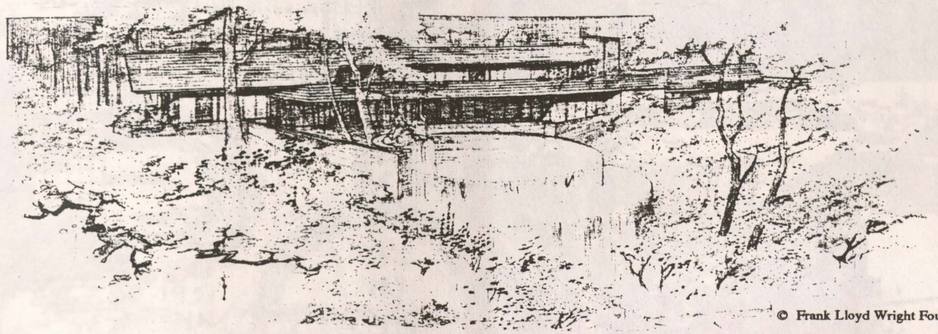
All designers have one or more distinctive signatures that appear and reappear in their work; Frank Lloyd Wright was no exception. His organic architecture has many signatures that, despite the type and with the exception of his earliest "moonlight" work, it is easy to single out a Wright-designed structure. In his landscapes also is found much experimentation; but the most common reappearing shapes, from his first to last residential design, are circular segments. He did not limit this use to his late-in-life "circular period" of building design; it is evident in site plans repeatedly over his seventy-year career.

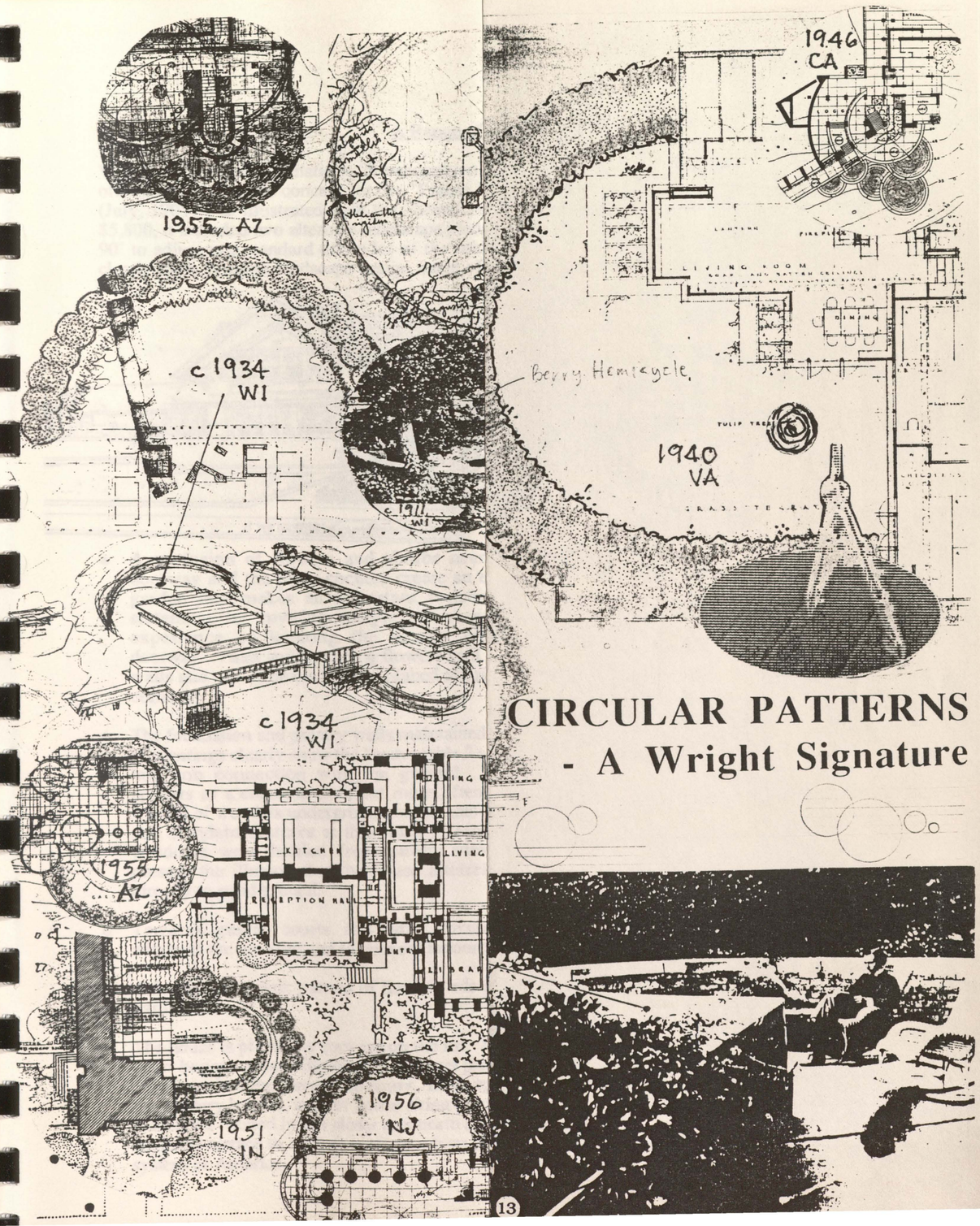
Wright's site plan for Louis Sullivan's winter home in Mississippi contained no less than seven complete circles, one semi-circle, and one eclipse for various gardens--mainly for roses, to accommodate Sullivan's hobby whenever he could get away for a southern vacation. At Wright's first home (Oak Park, 1889), his favorite spot to relax was his shady, sheltered, semi-circular terrace. Wright was still using the shape for landscape features, as well as the building itself, for one of his last designs (Norman Lykes, Phoenix AZ, 1959), not constructed until a number of years after his death. The lay of the land mattered little, as Wright swung his drawing compass for his first great Prairie house (Willits, Illinois, 1902) followed by an elegant estate (D. D. Martin, New York, 1904), a semi-circular covered porch compared to the bow of a ship (Tomek, Illinois, 1907), and an open half-circle terrace at his own estate (Taliesin, Wisconsin, 1911).

Circles and semi-circles were the basis of the designs of gardens, pools, and privacy walls at the Barnsdall Estate "Hollyhock House" developed between 1917 and 1921 in Hollywood, California. In the 1930s, he made several sketches for three circular gardens to provide enclosure for the remodeled Hillside School and its new drafting studio, but these--like the Willits garden and the more elaborate Martin "floricycle," detailed by Walter Burley Griffin--were never built. Wright personally supervised the landscape plans for both Jacobs I and II (1937, 1948), which detailed floricycle-like elements, but in fact were planted and maintained less formally (See plan, page 16). Mrs. Herman Mossberg (South Bend, Indiana, 1950s) refers to a section of her garden as a "floricycle," a beautiful work of art that goes beyond the cliches some of the designs appear to be (See plan, page 87).

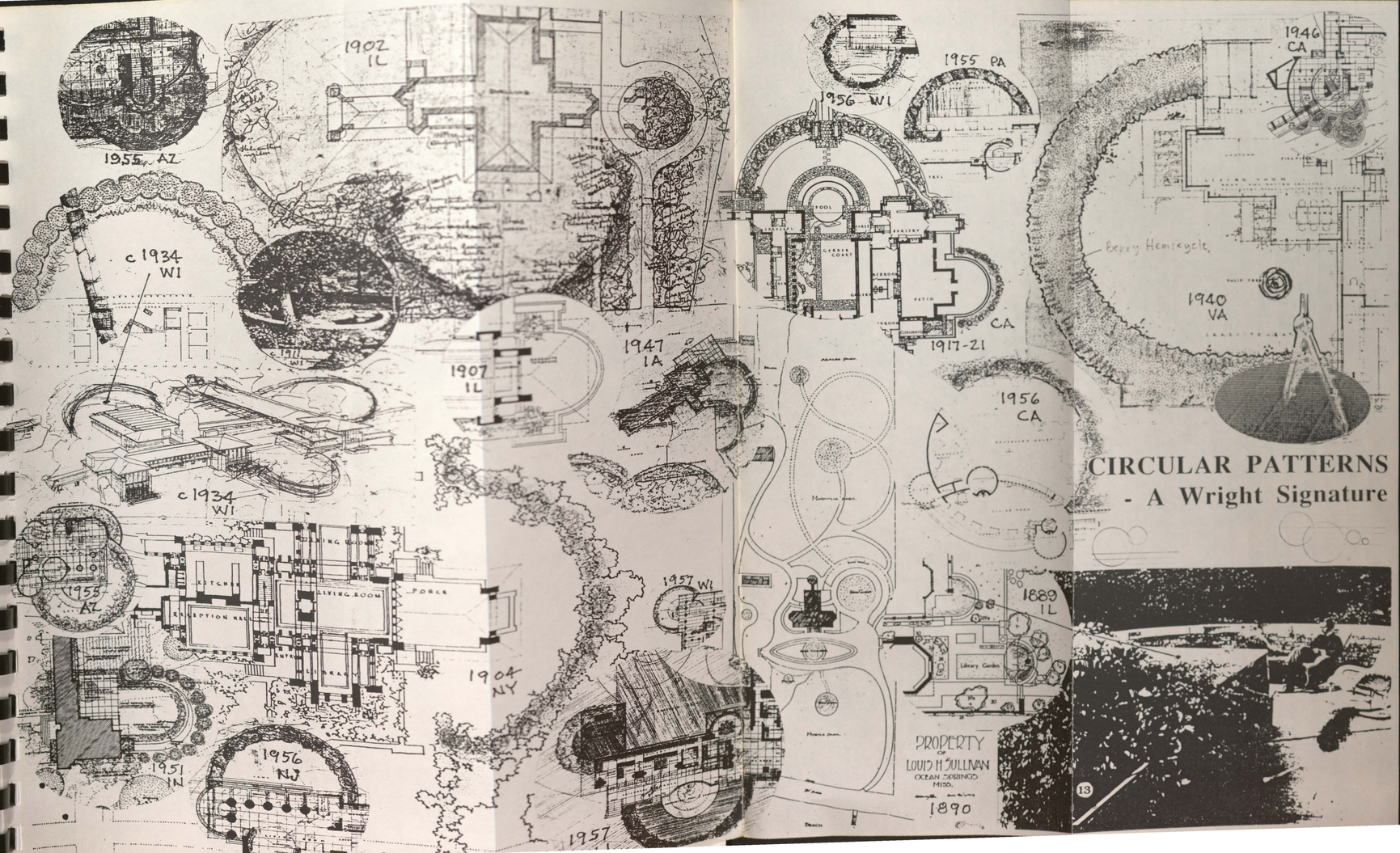
Wright used many rectangular shapes as well, but, if there is a distinctive signature to be identified in his landscapes, it is circular segments. As is shown in the exhibit on the following fold-out page, Wright used the semi-circle as his design form from coast-to-coast: for gardens, pools, terraces, patios, grass panels, retaining walls, and even auto courts.

For several residences, Wright designed circular pools to overflow onto a lower level, as for the Glore House (below) in Lake Forest, Illinois; none were built. Current owners of the Glore House instead built for this space a hexangular shaped wood deck.



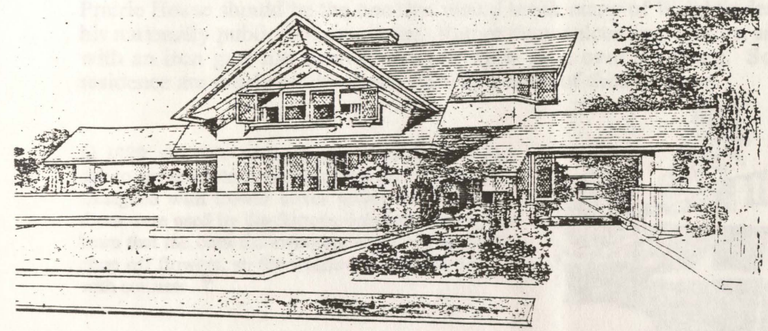


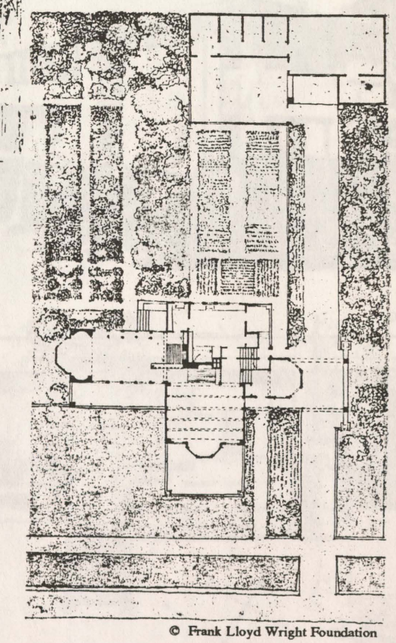
CIRCULAR PATTERNS
- A Wright Signature


1955 AZ
1902 IL
c 1934 WI
c 1911 WI
1907 IL
1947 IA
c 1934 WI
1955 AZ
KITCHEN
LIVING ROOM
PORCH
1904 NY
1951 IN
1956 NJ
1957
1956 WI
1955 PA
POOL
GARDEN COURT
PATIO
CA
1917-21
1956 CA
1957 WI
1889 IL
Library Garden
PROPERTY OF LOUIS H SULLIVAN OCEAN SPRINGS MISS.
1890
1946 CA
Berry Hemicycle
1940 VA
CIRCULAR PATTERNS
- A Wright Signature

A Range of Landscape Plans

Wright received his first nationwide recognition in 1901with the publication of two feature articles that officially unveiled his concept for the "Prairie House." The second feature in *Ladies Home Journal* (July, 1901) was illustrated with the "Small House With Lots Of Room In It " (below). Priced at $5,800, it included two alternate landscape plans, indicating how the home could be placed or rotated 90° to adjust to a standard urban lot of the midwest. This perspective drawing and landscape plan clearly show Wright's landscape design intent of this period:





© Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

- A profusion of flowers and shrubs near the doorway and the porte-cochere create an entry garden that makes an important welcoming statement by inviting people to have the experience of locating. the almost hidden doorway. Vines and cascading flowers spill over walls and out of boxes or urns placed at critical corners.

- The foundation and privacy walls maintained free of plantings clearly show the "water table," a low but firm connection with the ground. This appears as a concrete slab, but more often was framed of wood as underground basements were still standard features at this time. Basement windows were hidden from public view to present the illusion that the house interrelated directly to solid ground.

- Terraces, garden courts, and partly covered porches help reinforce the illusion that the bay windows are reaching out to connect indoors with outdoors

- A formal geometric pattern of flower beds and vegetable garden units makes full use of the rear yard.

- The house is placed far forward on the lot. The walled terrace is placed forward of the setback for other houses when following a common property line, providing more sun and breezes than any neighbors had the pleasure to enjoy. Little space is wasted for side yards, so typical of the turn-of-the-century houses, and for house siting practices ninety years later. The alternate landscape plan placed the rotated house closer to a north side lot line, leaving an expansive grassed side yard and enclosed terrace to capture sunlight where that orientation was possible with the grid-ironed street system of America.

Despite all the free publicity and power of the press, it is believed that only one commission came into the office as a direct result of these articles. The exception, according to Manson, is the Harvey P. Sutton Residence, built in McCook, Nebraska. [8]

No supervision by Wright (who was then in Japan) was given to the Harvey Sutton Residence (1905), nor by any of his Oak Park Studio staff during its construction. The house was built through a series of letters and under the direct charge of Walter B. Griffin, with Mrs. Sutton serving as general contractor-supervisor. It is ironic that the single house built because of the unveiling of the original Prairie House should be the one that would break many of Wright's design rules, as purported through his nationally publicized examples. Rather than welcoming visitors, an eight-foot concrete block wall with an iron gate has been erected at some time over the years. Some of the best features of the residence are nearly hidden from view by a bank of sheared yews.

In 1989, the view of the house (right) looked like this to anyone able to penetrate the prison-like wall. Designed with flower boxes under the windows, these were used by the Suttons only long enough to learn that the outward-swinging windows tended to chop off flowers, so the window boxes were filled with concrete. [9]

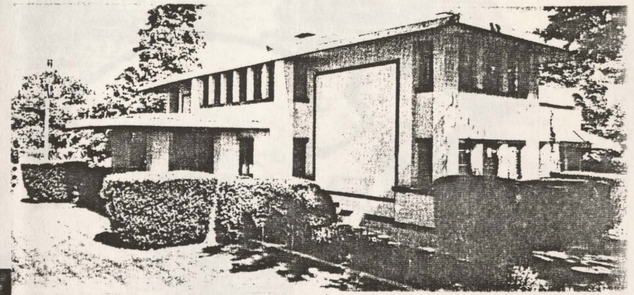
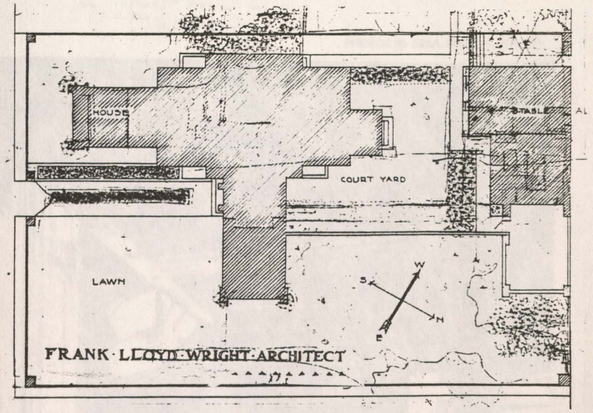


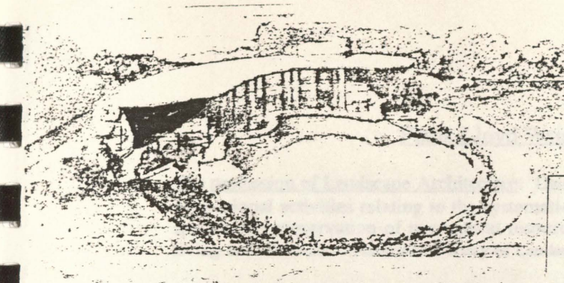
Photo Courtesy of David Bell

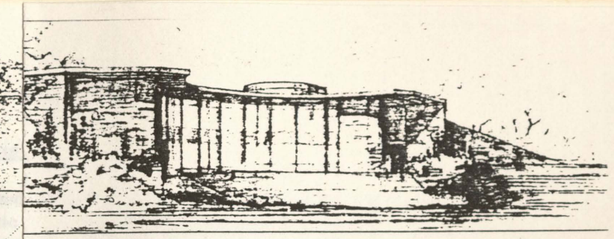


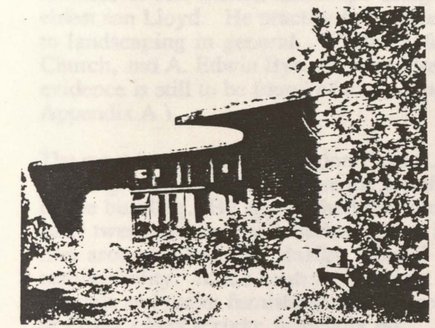
Wright's 1903 landscape plan (above) for the F. W. Little Residence in Peoria, Illinois was a simple extension of the geometric grid lines of the house. No foundation planting was proposed, but the formal entry was to be approached through a long, flower-bed entry garden. This 1990 view (left) shows how Wright's original intent was misunderstood, or ignored.

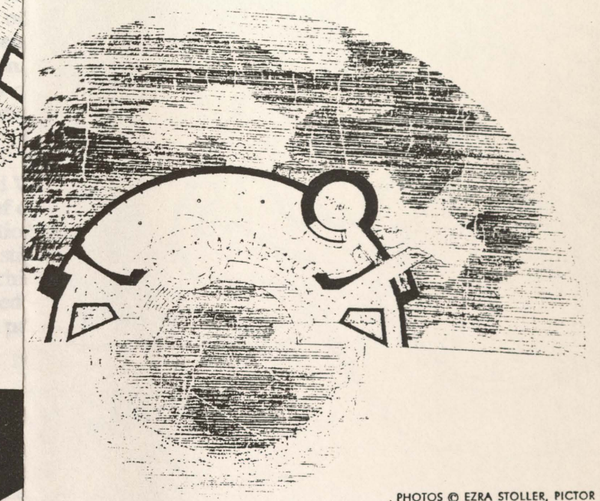
8 Grant Carpenter Manson, *Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910: The First Golden Age.* Van Norstrand Reinhold Co., New York, 1958.

9 Albert Lee, "Wrighteous Vision," article in *Twenty-one Magazine*.. Century 21 Real Estate Corp., 1989.









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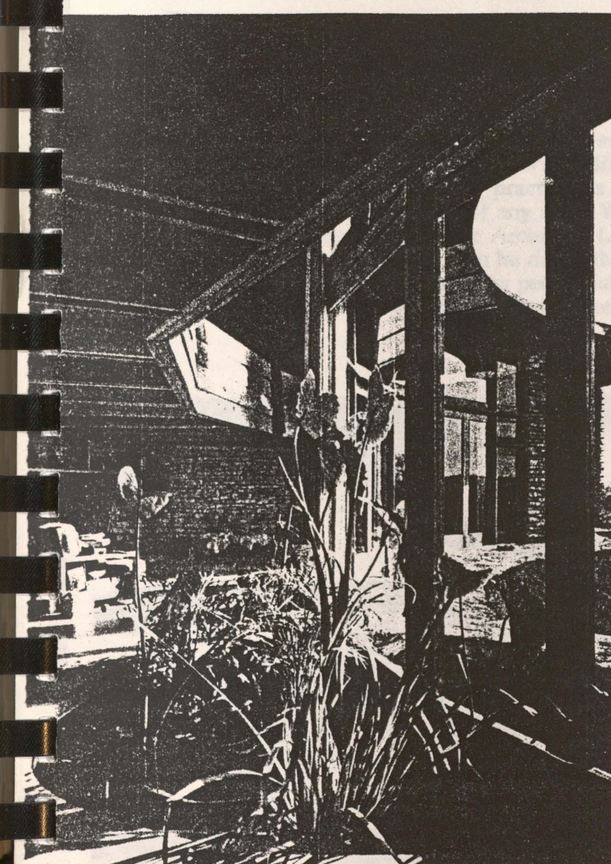

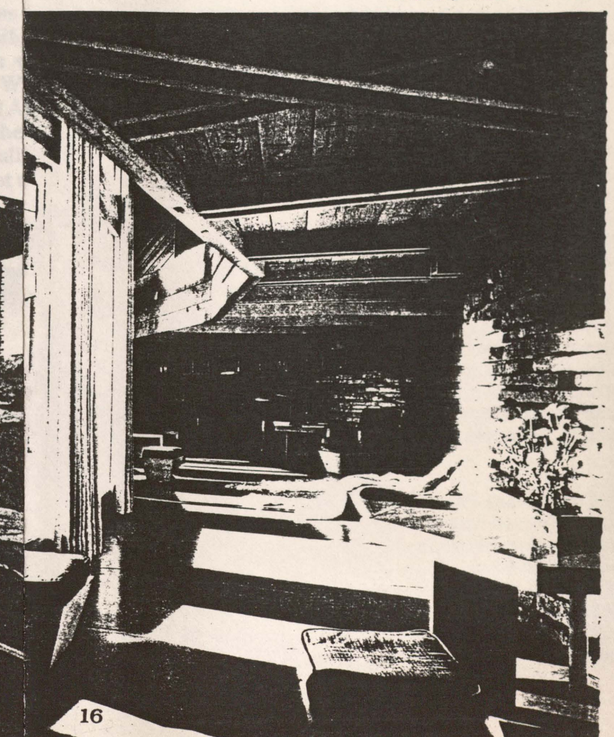

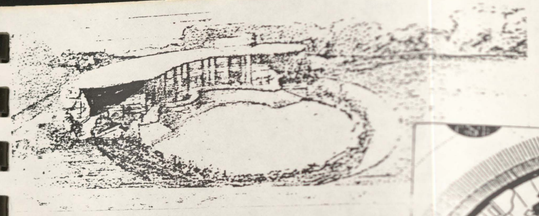

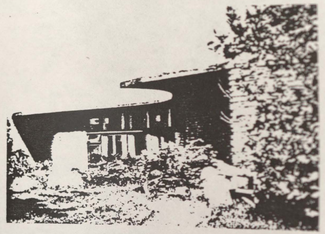

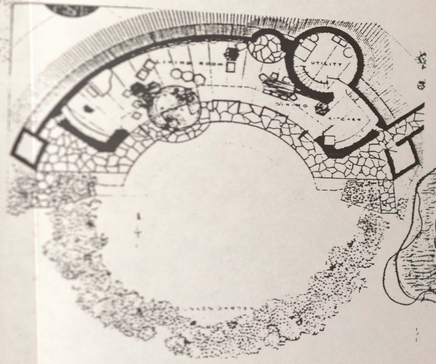

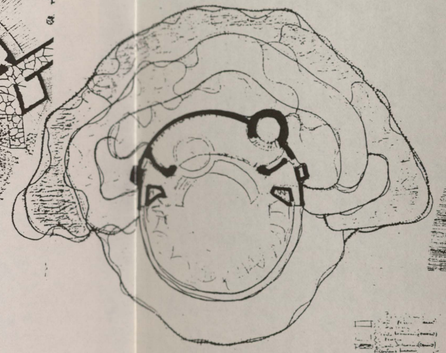

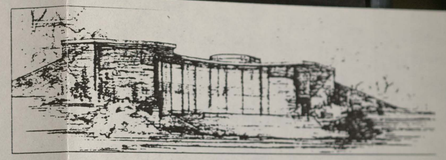

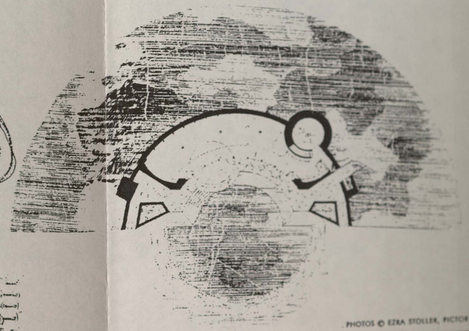

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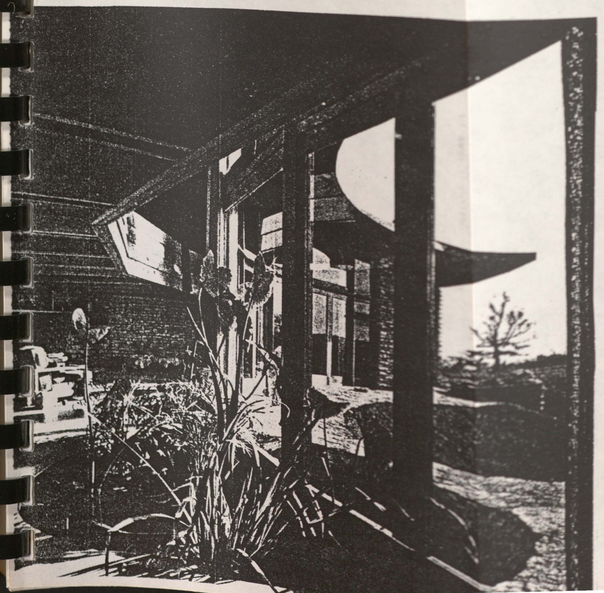
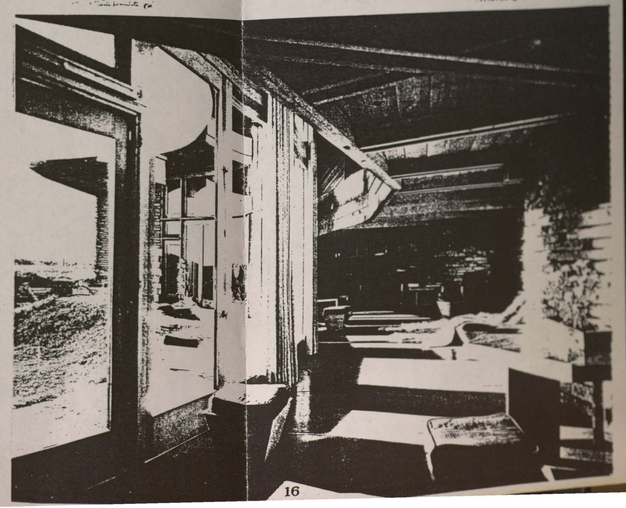


The Jacobs House II

Jacobs II, near Madison, Wisconsin, is as organic and environmentally sound as any to come off the master's drawing board. The prototype solar hemicycle features a sunken garden serving as a suntrap and thermal mass to help heat the house during cold Wisconsin winters. The excavated earth piled against the north wall shelters the house against prevailing winds. Inadequate overhangs and single-pane glass, which caused overheating on hot days and contributed to some cool nights, was an oversight recently corrected.

The unusual planting plans (dated 1942) make interesting art compositions but, unfortunately, the proposal was not presented to the Jacobs family, and the pattern of vines and groundcover never were planted. In their book, *Building With Frank Lloyd Wright*, Herbert and Katherine Jacobs make no reference to the recently discovered planting plans, but state that Wright specified masses of conifers for windbreaks at each end of the house. These became overgrown in time and had to be thinned.

During a videotaped interview (March 1, 1989), Katherine Jacobs stated, "Mr. Wright, knowing that we had little funds, told us to go into the woods and transplant native Wisconsin plants, much as we had done at our first Wright-designed Usonia I. He also told me on one visit that we needed a vertical element in one of our stone planting boxes. We planted a tall Arborvitae from the woods to satisfy his vision of the need to contrast the horizontality of the low, partly buried building. Cornelia Brierly obtained names of plant nurseries for us where we could buy aquatic plants for our indoor-outdoor pool. These are the only plants I recall we ever purchased."



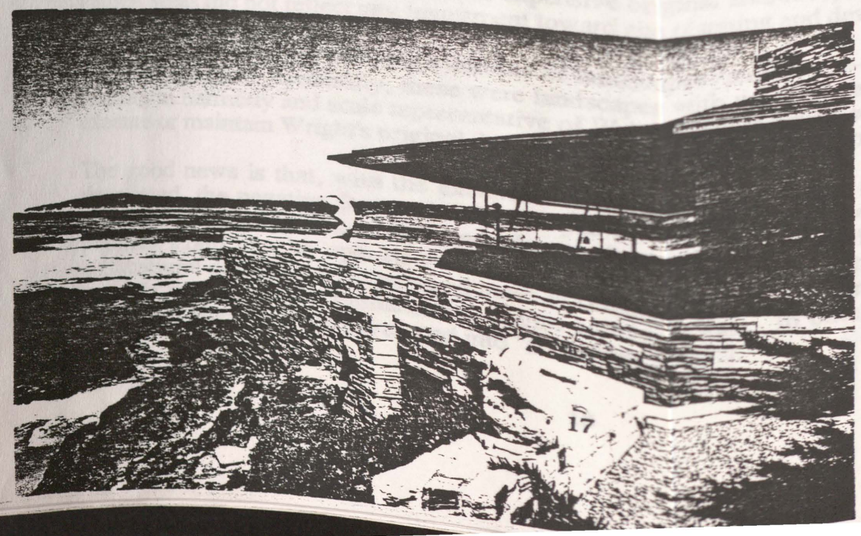
Frank Lloyd Wright As Landscape Architect

The profession of Landscape Architecture: Landscape architecture as a science and an art embraces those professional activities relating to the systematic planning of land areas, the design of outdoor places and spaces, the conservation of our natural resources, and the creation of a more useful, safe, and pleasant living environment. (American Society of Landscape Architects)

During his seventy-year career, Wright served as his own landscape architect or made use of the services of self-trained landscape designers on his staff, in particular Walter Burley Griffin and his eldest son Lloyd. He practiced at a time when his competition gave little regard to outdoor spaces or to landscaping in general. While professional landscape architects such as Jens Jensen, Thomas Church, and A. Edwin Bye, Jr. were hired by client-owners to design landscapes for their residences, evidence is still to be found of true collaboration of services with Wright in the design process (See Appendix A).

The most important contribution Frank Lloyd Wright made to the profession of landscape architecture was to graphically demonstrate the benefits of designing the landscape simultaneously with the design of the building. He approached the integration of architecture and landscape in a way unknown in early twentieth-century America. It was and still often is today the habit of architects to draw a dashed line around a building design labeled "architectural limits," beyond which the architect has no responsibility. In his contracts, Wright stated that his ten-percent fee included "the planting of the grounds and major furnishings considered as part of the building scheme" (See *The Personal Services of Frank Lloyd Wright*, Appendix B).

Wright certainly met many of the criteria for qualifications used by people calling themselves landscape architects. His ability to "marry" building and site of his *treasures* has long been the envy of landscape architects, and the reason students of design schools are assigned Wright landscapes to study. While there are shortcomings in many of his landscape plans, particularly site engineering, he would have had no problem obtaining a license to practice and use the title "landscape architect," if he had wished, or had registration of landscape architecture as a profession been accomplished earlier. As it was, the first state to pass a registration law was California, in 1953--only six years prior to Wright's death. Up to that time, *anyone* could practice as well as use the title "landscape architect," without qualifications or examination of any sort. Wright might have joined the professional society, the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), organized in 1899, but he likely had even less interest in this organization than he did in the sister organization, American Institute of Architects (AIA). His documented distaste for people calling themselves landscape architects would suggest that he felt it all right to practice the profession, but not use the title.



"Cabin on the Rock," Carmel CA.

Vacation home of Mrs. Clinton S. Walker. Wright's "jewel," with the harmony relationship of house to its setting expressing the organic--a oneness with the site--assisted by "the sympathetic hand of Thomas Church" or "a professional landscaper to undo all Mr. Wright had done for her." (See Appendix A)

RESEARCH SYNOPSIS

Seventy-Three On-Site Evaluations

The site evaluation was comprised of two parts, completed independently by the landscape architect. One part consisted of a general checklist to provide an overall *feeling* for the landscape. The second part assigned points of up to "10.0" for each of ten fundamental design considerations: privacy, unity, harmony, scale, community, simplicity, plantings, atmosphere, maintenance, and architecture-site relationship.

Less than one-half of the landscapes made an impression on the researcher to as great an extent as Wright's architecture. Approximately two-thirds presented a landscape design compatible and in unity with the architecture, and three-fourths were rated as being compatible with the natural environment. Ninety-nine percent of the landscapes were given positive ratings for play and entertainment space, and ninety-two percent received positive marks because of Wright's famous ability to integrate indoor-outdoor relationships that draw interior observers out into the exterior landscape. Fifty-five percent were rated negatively for failure of the landscape design to create space as outdoor rooms, provide visual surprises or lingering images, or contribute more than cosmetic decoration to the visual effect. Grading/drainage systems or other utilitarian aspects given aesthetic and ecological considerations, as well as adequate functionability, received positive response in little more than one-half (57%) of the evaluations.

Rating of Fundamental Design Considerations

The evaluator gave perfect scores of 10.0 points to four of the seventy-three properties studied in depth. An additional twenty-one sites were allocated scores of between 9.0 and 9.8, indicating that more than one-third of the seventy-three residences evaluated have environments of high quality. The average score was 7.1 points. Items rating above average were privacy (8.9), atmosphere (7.7), simplicity (7.7), and community (7.4). Design considerations that ranked below average were plantings (6.4), scale (6.6), unity (6.9), and harmony (7.0). Of these landscapes, twenty-two (30%) were ranked Excellent, seventeen (23%) were ranked Good, and thirty-four (47%) were ranked Nothing Special. It must be remembered that this ranking is based upon conditions found between 1989 and 1991. At least four of the sites at one time in the past had gardens and site development that would appear of excellent quality, based on landscape plans and historic photographs. Another five, high-quality plans apparently never were implemented, based upon documentation located to date.

In almost one-half of the examples, gravel driveways had been paved, a factor which impacts runoff and related drainage problems. In several cases--even though modern kitchens and swimming pools had been installed, as well as rooms of expensive original and/or reproduction furniture--the site and garden areas did not reflect any investment toward site planning and development.

Most disappointing were the high number of landscapes--almost one-half--that only can be listed as "nothing special." Generally, these were landscapes with no clear design consideration, landscapes lacking in harmony and scale representative of Wright's architecture, with no recent attempts made to execute or maintain Wright's original design intent regarding the exterior environment.

The good news is that, with the exception of examples where part of a lot has been sold off and developed, the negative features of landscapes can be reversed. Overgrown plants can be pruned properly or replaced; broken walls and other outdoor construction can be repaired; glazed (glassed-in) porches again can be opened to the outdoors, etc. Most importantly, professional landscape architectural designs can be prepared more in keeping with Wright's architecture, and implemented to upgrade the underrated fundamental design considerations. In other words, the "nothing special" landscapes always can be developed into "something special."

Case Studies

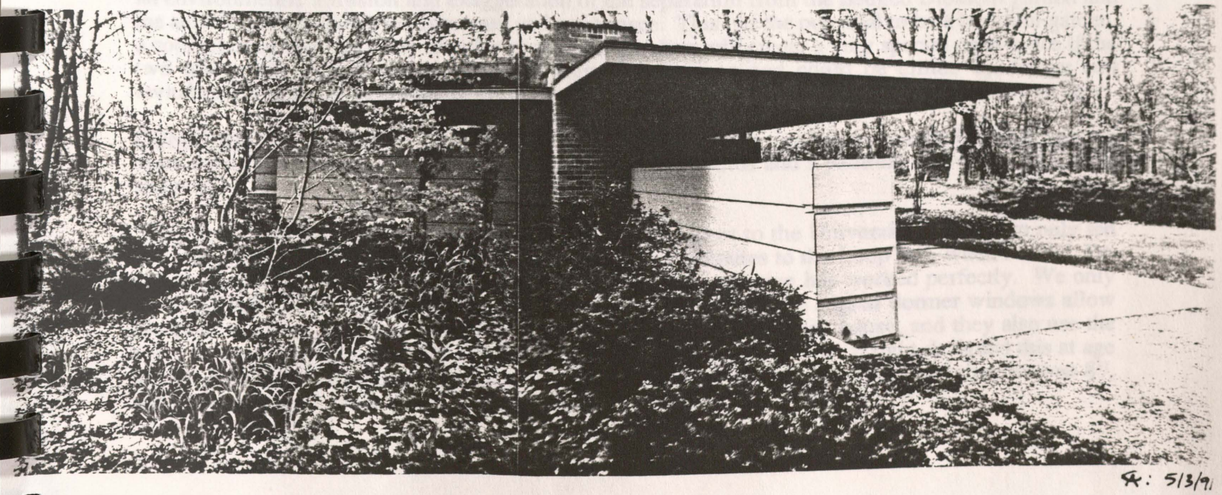
The following seventeen Case Studies are a cross section of the seventy-three sites evaluated. The studies are representative of findings summarized as "Best Features of Site and Development," "Shortcomings of Site Development," "Selected Comments by Current Owners," and related information.

The "S" numbers identifying each case study follow the system developed by William Allin Storrer for his catalog, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Second Edition), which is largely chronological as to the date of design, if not always in the order of actual construction.

The Perfect Tens

Four of the seventy-three occupied residential properties personally evaluated by the researcher were accorded perfect ratings of "10.0" in each category of fundamental design considerations: one in Illinois, one in Arizona, and two in Michigan. Only one, the M. M. Smith Usonian in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan (S-287), is still occupied by one of the original owners--Mrs. Sarah Smith, whose husband engaged Thomas Church as landscape architect. The oldest of the four is the Ingalls Prairie House (S-161) which has undergone a ten-year major restoration, expansion, and replanting program by its architect-owners. A young landscape architect is owner of the beautiful Pratt House and site (S-295), located at the entrance of "The Acres," the Country Homes Community in Galesburg, Michigan. Perhaps the most unique is the contemporary setting of the Carson Residence (S-326) in Phoenix, Arizona, for reasons explained in the Case Studies narrative.

An additional property in Michigan also would have been rated a "10.0" but is not included, since the structure--although designed by Wright--was placed upon a site different than the one for which it was designed, and Wright had nothing to do with siting or supervision of construction. This is one of the best known and is unquestionably the purest form of the Usonian type houses: the Goetsch-Winckler (1939), in Okemos, Michigan. This residence is included (below) mainly to suggest its current excellence in both architecture and landscape setting, since most published photographs are decades old.



CASE STUDY S-11	Site Evaluation Score: 6.9

Original Owners: Warren McArthur, Sr.
Address: Chicago, IL (Kenwood)
Type: Eclectic; Single-style "Dutch Colonial"
Current Owner/Occupant: Mrs. Ruth Michael

Built: 1892 Stable / Remodel: 1900
Orientation: East. Dormer windows allow south sun into upstairs bedrooms; bay windows reach for sun in the SE and SW corners.

BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT. Open porch projected into front yard provides privacy and breezes for outdoor-sheltered space, as an extension of both living room and parlor. Ample rear shaded yard for children's play and private outdoor entertaining. Main entrance door on narrow, south side is convenient to driveway without interrupting use of front porch. Dormer windows seem to reach out to bring the outdoors in. Multi-trunk trees in the front yard provide scale, as well as shade, and help convert this urban block into a little oasis, with taller trees screening out the unkempt structures and high-rise buildings a few blocks away. The brick driveway and auto court are most attractive and provide unity to the brick residence.

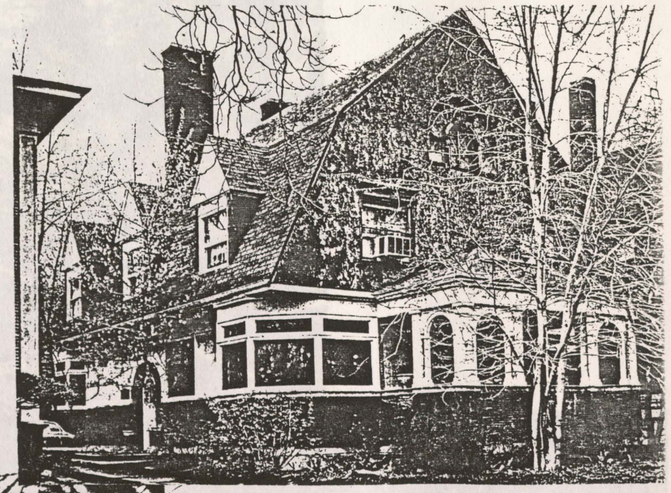
SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: Unfortunately, Wright did not unify this design with the Colonial Revival Blossom House built earlier the same year on the lot to the south. No privacy is possible when both families happen to simultaneously use their front porches. Views through the Blossom porch extend to a public park across a side street. If this was intended, it could cause too much neighborliness at times. Perhaps it is a coincidence that the McArthur and Blossom porches seem to represent side-by-side "goldfish bowls."

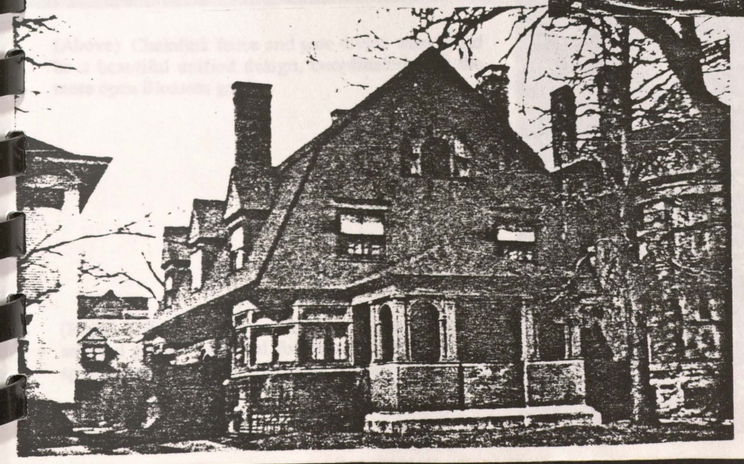
More recent shortcomings of the site could and should be easily corrected. Extensive foundation plantings hide the water table ground line that historic photos show was Wright's technique of anchoring a building to the ground, rather than have it seem to float away on a sea of shrubs. Three volunteer box elder trees in a narrow strip of earth are "taking over" the doorway area, with limbs rubbing against the roofs of both houses and roots likely to cause basement leakage. The main negative factor of the site is a chainlink fence with a "Beware of Dog" sign on the gate, which creates an environmental intrusion and exaggeration of the separation from the hedged Blossom garden and the attractive McArthur brick courtyard and patio space. This has the potential to be a beautiful garden, a cool relaxing spot, and play area for grandchildren. It would create a very special open space if the two rear yards were thinned of their overgrown plantings and could be united by design and revitalization as a way of obtaining the opportunity missed by the young Wright nearly a century ago.

COMMENTS BY CURRENT OWNER: "We've planted all the smaller trees and all shrubs you see since we moved here in 1954 as third owners." Historic photos and a painting show how barren the site was.

"This house has been perfect for our family. Both girls went to the University of Chicago only ten minutes away, and I also worked there. It is only fifteen minutes to the Loop and, when I travel, I'm always glad to get back home. Sun shading and natural ventilation has worked perfectly. We only have AC units in the bedrooms. Despite dark woodwork inside, the angled dormer windows allow plenty of sunshine into the house. A young couple live over the coach house, and they also use the rear yard, cooking on a grill, etc. I relax mostly on the front porch. Mr. Wright designed this at age 25, the last of his 'bootlegged' houses, while working for Sullivan. We met him when he was 89, and he remembered the design of our unique sideboard and asked how we liked it."

Front porch--Warren McArthur, Sr.. Accessible only from interior of house. Open to breezes, but protected from rain. Many guests of 1893 Columbian Exposition rested here. Opening on right faces porch of Blossom House.



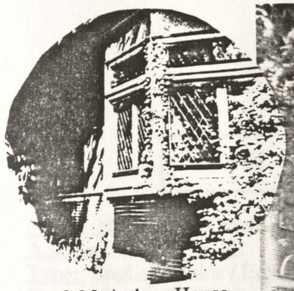


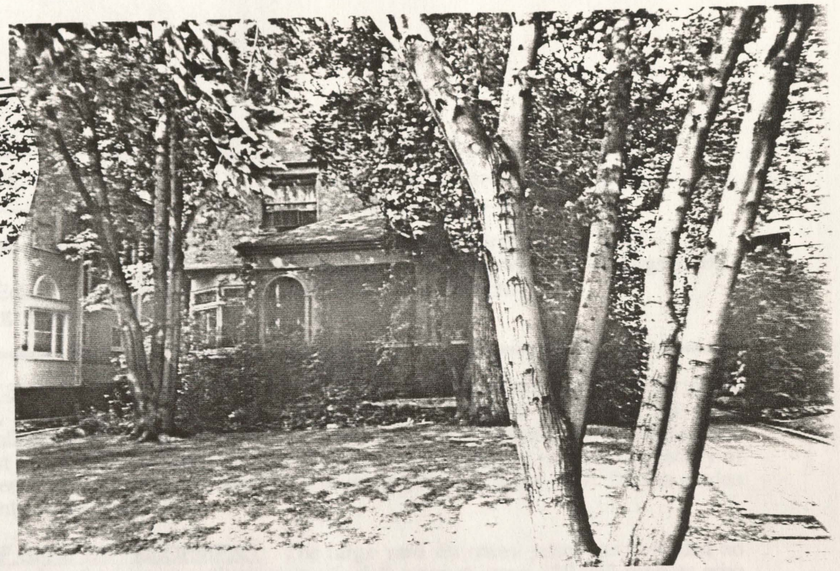
Photographs taken over time show how water table and other interesting details are now hidden by overgrown plantings.

Stable and apartments designed by Wright in 1900 provides attractive background on west lot line. Overgrown rear yard has great potential. Attractive brick driveway, as seen over gate.

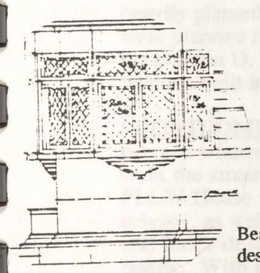
(Above) Chainlink fence and gate divide what could be a beautiful unified design, coordinated with the more open Blossom garden.

(Right) Tiny patio area with shade garden suggests an even greater potential for private outdoor living space, even in a crowded city like Chicago.





Dark color of McArthur House makes it almost disappear into background and overgrown foundation planting. Blossom House is to left.



Beautiful entry on south side and sun-capturing bay windows. "Weed trees" are causing destruction to building and are not needed in this already shady location.

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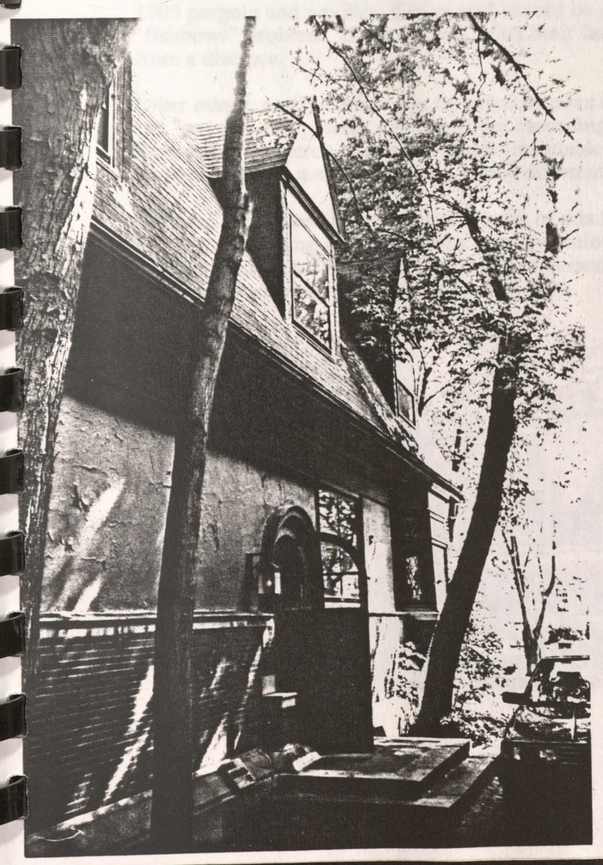


CASE STUDY S-34 **Site Evaluation Score: 5.9**

Original Owners: Nathan Moore
Address: Oak Park, IL
Type: English Tudor / Eclectic
Current Owner/Occupant: Mr/Mrs William Dugal

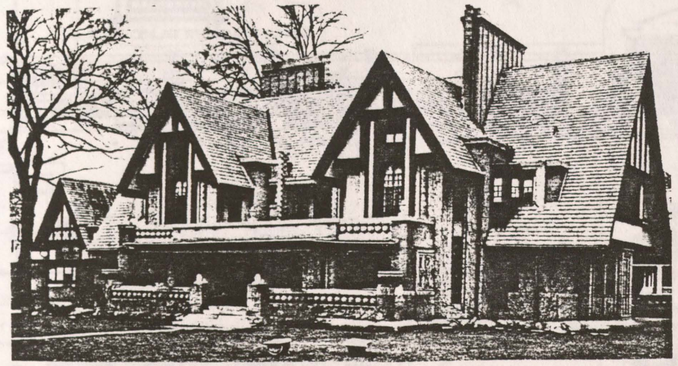
Built: 1895 Burned/Redesigned: 1923
Orientation: South. Major windows, large yard, covered porch are on south.

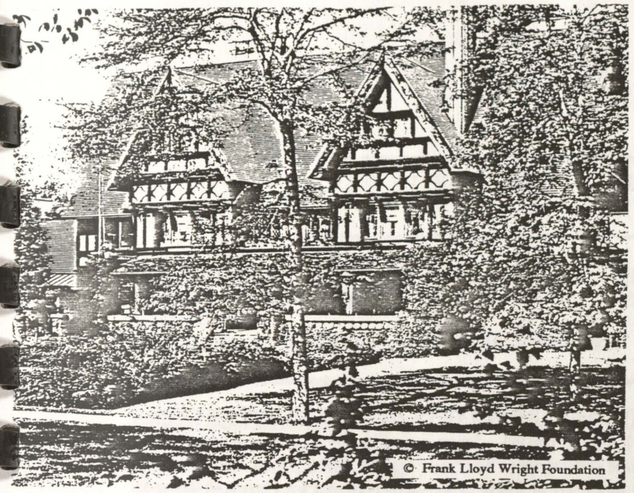
BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: House is placed with entry side against public sidewalk on the north, a true, zero-lot-line design. This makes entire yard usable and was once heavily planted as a strolling garden. Connected to the conservatory, an elaborate pergola and pavilion were planned by Wright in 1905, but remains unbuilt. This had the potential of rivaling the gallery of the Darwin D. Martin residence in Buffalo, designed a year earlier, as well as the W. E. Martin garden features built in 1903 only a few blocks away.

SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: The large yard for many years has provided no privacy whatsoever. Benches for rest or sunbathing are in full view of some 100,000 tourists who walk the streets of Oak Park, and especially congregate near this location, across the street from the FLLW Home and Studio. Historic photos prior to 1923 show a garden development that provided privacy, as well as a smaller lawn area. Although beautifully maintained, with an interesting low wall and fence design, the effect is that of a private space to be seen but not touched by owners or the public. With everything in public view, the occupants rarely use their yard. Implementation of the 1905 pergola and pavilion design still should be given serious consideration as a good solution to the "fishbowl" problem, if the owners wish their landscape to be more than just something to observe from a distance.

Other minor, easily correctable negative features include urns incorrectly planted with juniper or other tall "pointy" evergreens, instead of the cascading vines that Wright made famous. Sculptured stone lions guard the porch, and low and uncomfortable concrete benches seem out of place with this refined home, but this is a matter of taste, which different owners express in different ways.

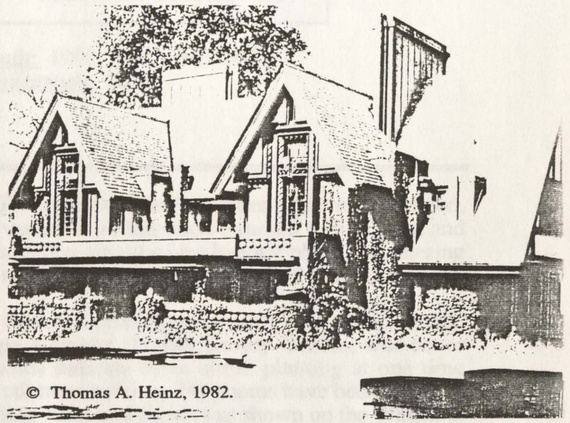
Flowers, manicured lawn, and all aspects of this fully "on display" property create an ambience more like a stage setting or an entrance to a pretentious public museum, rather than a personal yard of a private residence. While the best landscape designs appeal to a variety of senses, this is a textbook example of one meant for *visual* pleasure only.





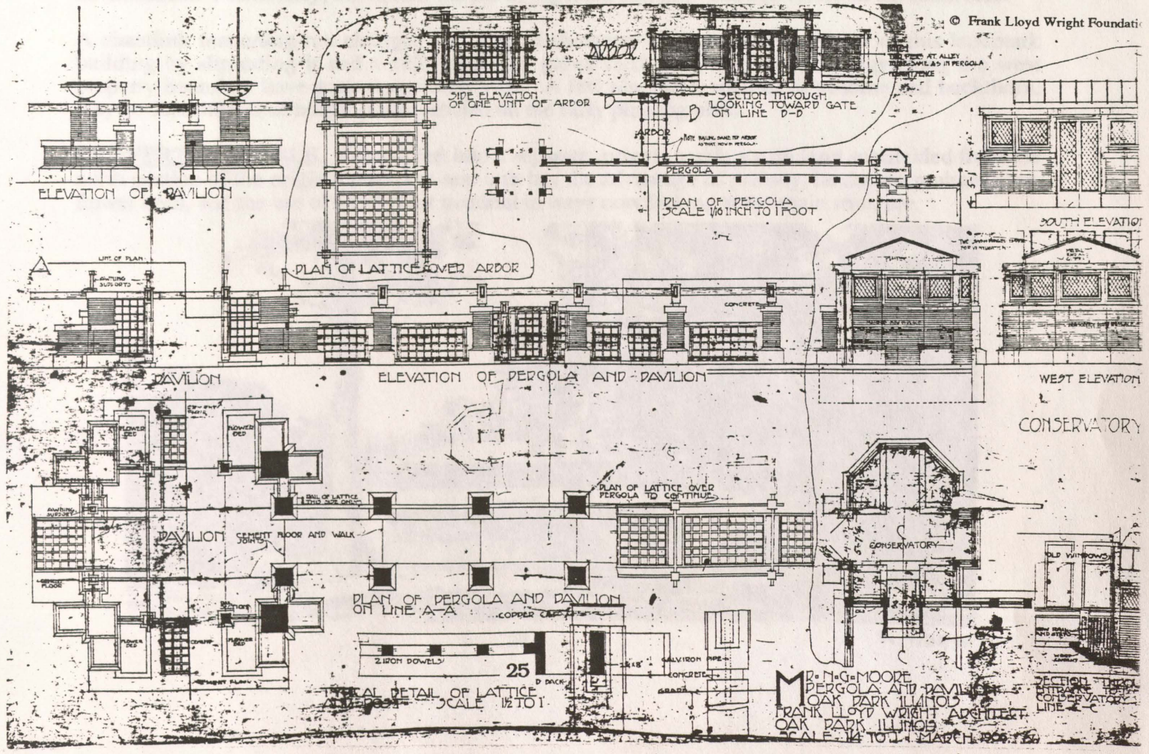
(Above) The Nathan Moore English half-timber residence of 1895 was heavily planted with a strolling garden, affording privacy from the street.

Rebuilt and redesigned into an elegant fantasy-like home in 1923, the south lawn was enlarged and the gardens destroyed. This is the public view of some 100,000 visitors each year who stroll the neighborhood after touring the FLLW Home and Studio, across the street. In 1990, the vines had been removed, and the house is open to even greater public display.



© Thomas A. Heinz, 1982.

In 1905, Wright prepared this plan for a conservatory addition that extended an elaborate pergola to a large garden pavilion, with brick piers and flower boxes. Designed to be draped with wild grape and morning glory vines, it would have provided maximum privacy and space for parties and relaxation, much as the now destroyed esquestered gardens of the W. E. Martin residence a few blocks away. This remains one of Wright's many unbuilt projects that still could be constructed to complete a great design composition, as well as provide the missing elements for this unique open space--a rare asset in historical Oak Park.



CASE STUDY S-54	Site Evaluation Score: 3.5 Converted Stable: 8.8

Original Owners: Ward W. Willits
Address: Highland Park, IL
Type: Prairie
Current Owner/Occupant: Mr/Mrs Milton Robinson

Built: 1902 Restored: 1980s
Orientation: South

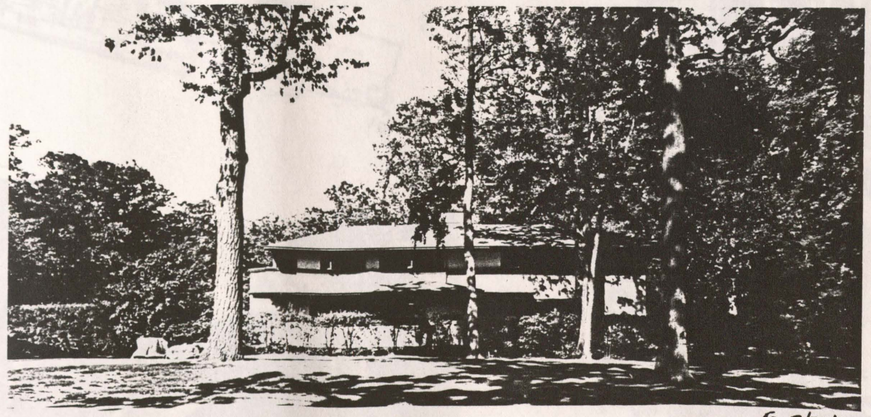
BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: Large estate within upper-scale neighborhood, with ample setback from busy road. Ground line (water table) has been returned to the "pure and uncluttered" look, after many years of overgrown foundation planting (see historic photo). Scattering of trees throughout property provide vertical element needed for contrast to horizontal lines of house.

SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: Detailed planting plan with "floricycle" design believed to be the work of Wright's staff landscape architect, Walter Burley Griffin, was never implemented, or has been removed. Historical photos indicate some shrub planting at one time provided a partial buffer to Sheridan Road, but only tall trees survive. No photos have been found to confirm the existence of the heavy planting of cascading vines and flowers as shown on the Wasmuth drawings and often published color perspective.

In late summer 1990, no flowers or vines were on display and the trademark urns were covered with brass domes designed for winter protection. A large wood deck has been built on the north side of the dining room, with the elongated porch designed to extend the indoors into the outdoors now enclosed completely--destroying the magic of Wright's best technique of wedding structure and the environment. Fortunately, the terrace off the living room still provides this effect on the south side.

A chainlink fence/dog-run changes the original character of the northeast corner of this landmark building by shrouding it and a side terrace in galvanized steel. Border plantings along the west property boundary have gone completely wild. A few plantings, such as hawthorne and buckthorn, may be descendants of border plants labeled on the early planting plan.

CONVERTED STABLE. Remodeled into a separate, private residence on land subdivided from the north portion of the original tract, the rear unit has the advantage of privacy, landscape maintenance, flower beds, and the use of other plant material in ways now lacking at the main structure.



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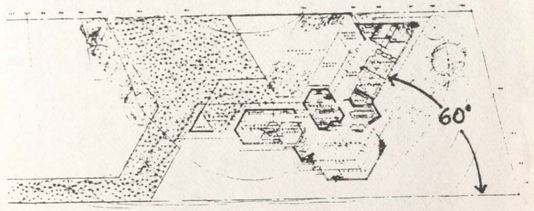
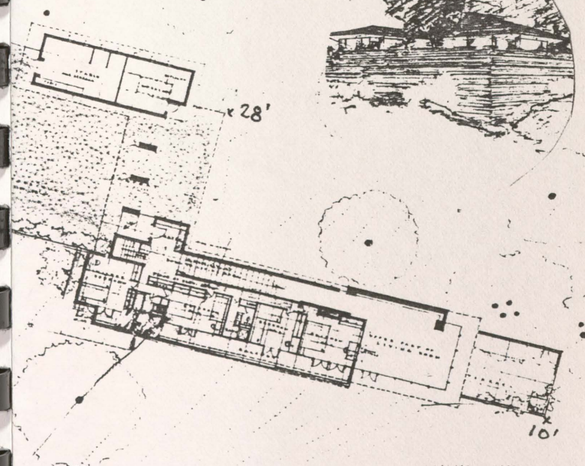
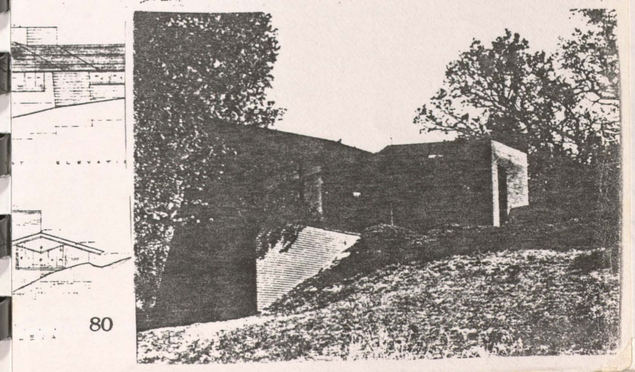
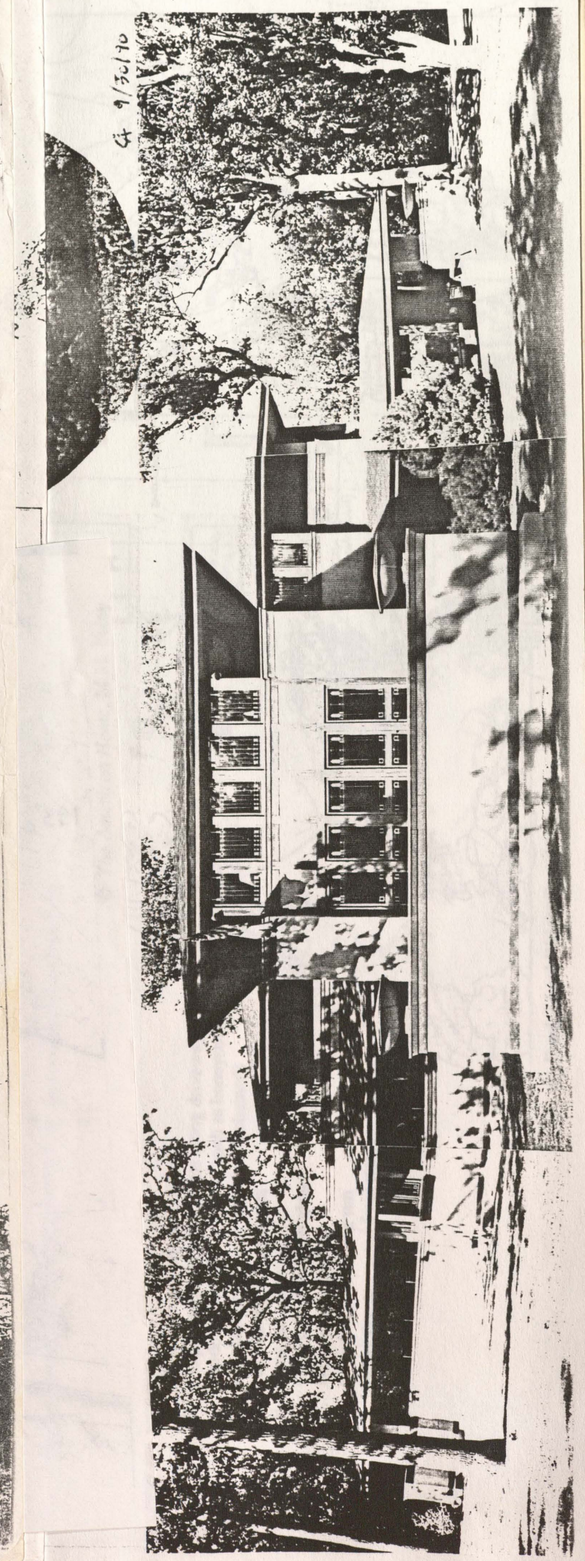
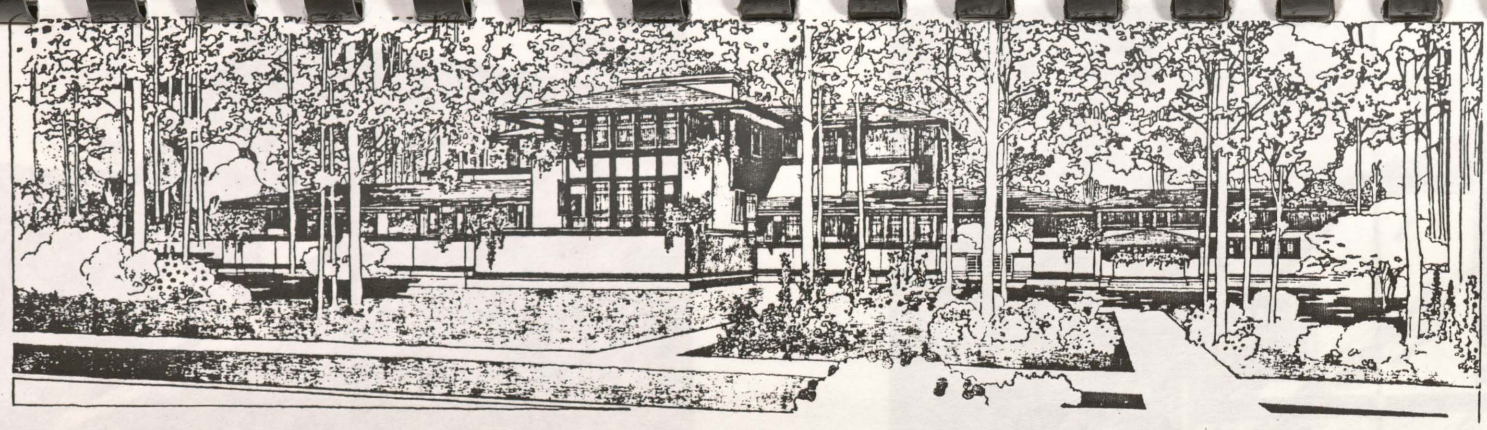


AGAINST THE GRAIN
Wright Battles Nature







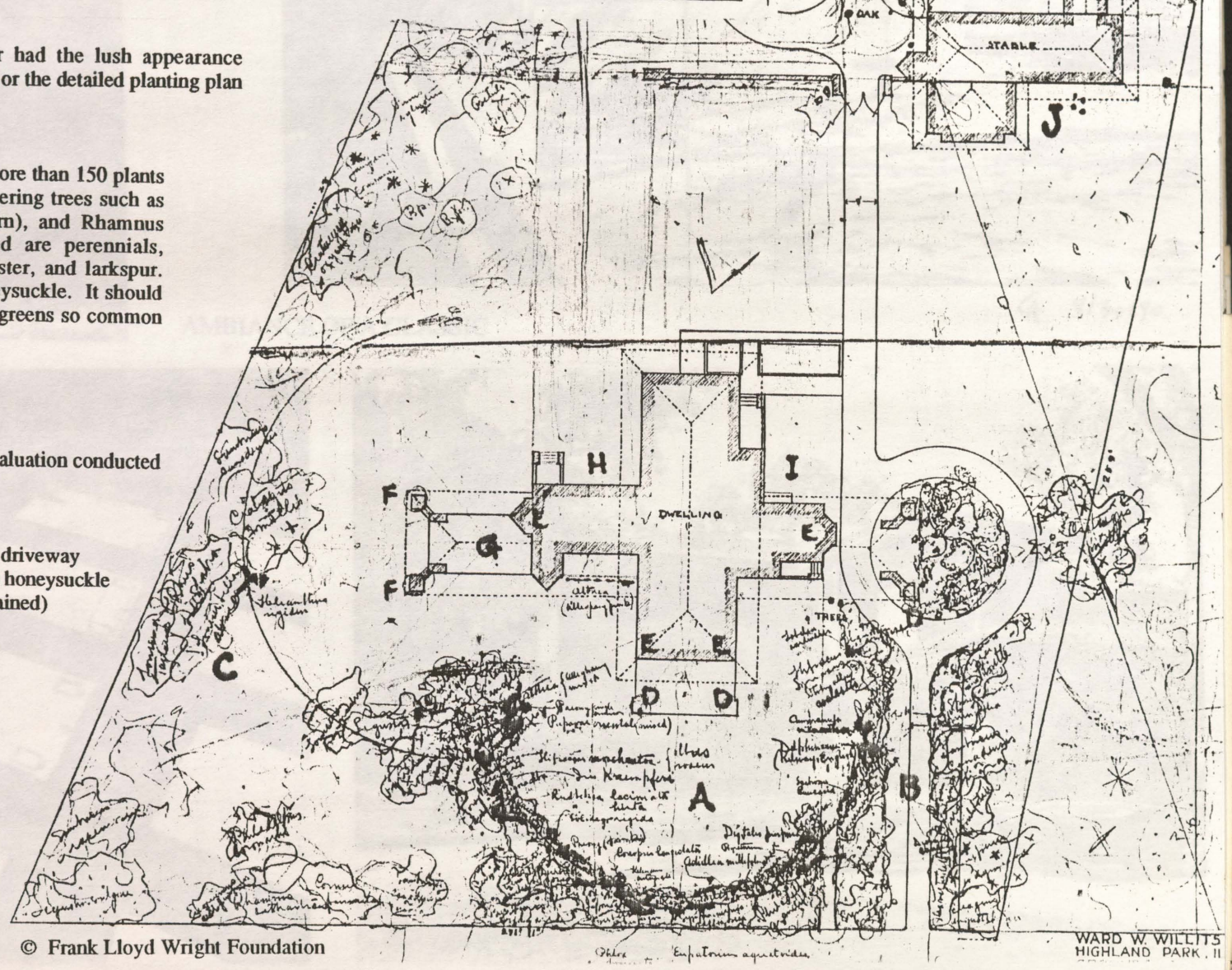


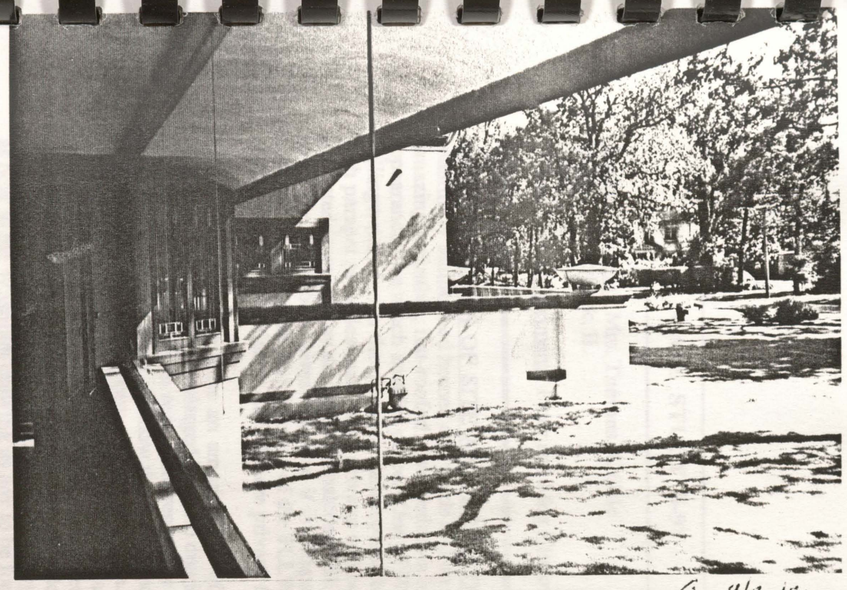
The Willits Residence apparently never had the lush appearance indicated in the Wasmuth drawing (above) or the detailed planting plan (right).

Longhand notes on the site plan identify more than 150 plants by botanical names, including native flowering trees such as Cornus (Dogwood), Crataegus (Hawthorn), and Rhamnus (Buckthorn). Most of the plants listed are perennials, including day lillies, delphiniums, iris, aster, and larkspur. Shrubs are predominately varieties of honeysuckle. It should be noted that Juniper, Pine, and other evergreens so common today are not included in this plan.

Letters indicate changes noted during the evaluation conducted on August 29/30, 1990:

A. Floricycle garden does not exist
B. No perennials or other plants along driveway
C. Border plants all deciduous, such as honeysuckle
D. No plantings in urns (covered & chained)
E. No balcony flower boxes
F. Urns are missing
G. Open porch has been glazed
H. New wooden deck
I. Chainlink fenced dog run
J. Residence converted from stable





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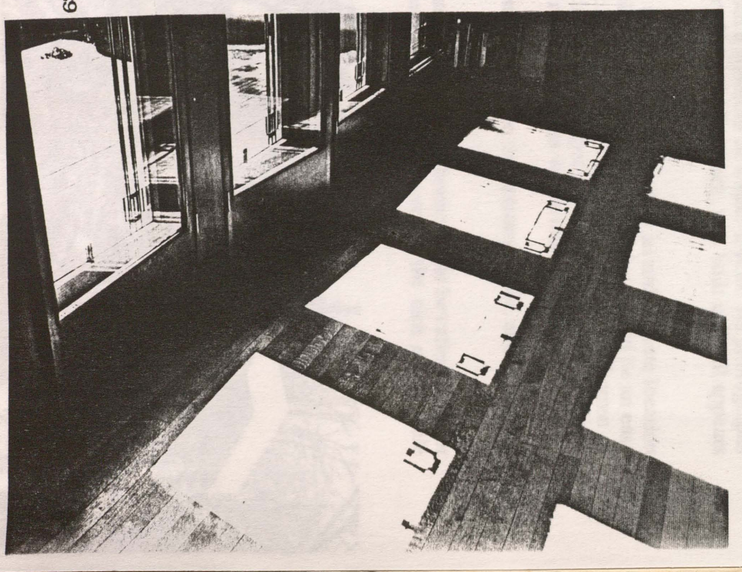
AMBIANCE OF A CLASSIC



CASE STUDY S-98 **Site Evaluation Score: 8.8**

Original Owners: Mrs. Thomas H. Gale
Address: Oak Park, IL
Type: Prairie
Current Owner/Occupant: Peter and Meg Klinkow

Designed: 1904 Built: 1909
Orientation: North

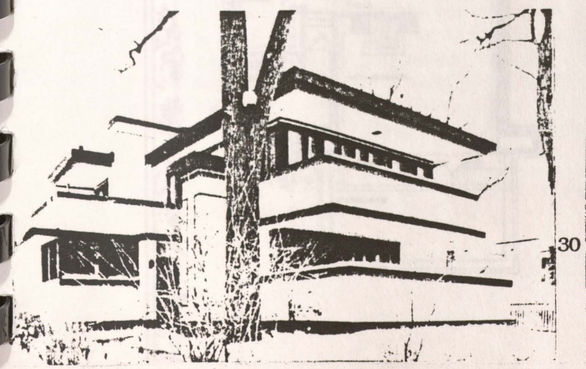
BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: Within an ideal wooded neighborhood of beautifully maintained homes and yards and on a dead-end street, the only curving street in Oak Park. Amazingly sizable, flat-roofed, five-bedroom house fitted onto a minimum size narrow lot, with the appearance of a much smaller place. One of Wright's early classics, he considered the forerunner of Fallingwater, due to the dramatic cantilevered balcony off the bedrooms. Terrace off the living room with parapet provides maximum privacy and outdoor living only a few feet back from the sidewalk, protected from rain by an overhead balcony. Slight rise in topography. Three steps on walk and three more for inside hall raises house so it is compatible with surrounding Victorian houses. Owner (an architectural historian and director of the FLLW Home and Studio Research Center) believes Wright shifted window location to afford more privacy from windows of Queen Anne style neighbor.

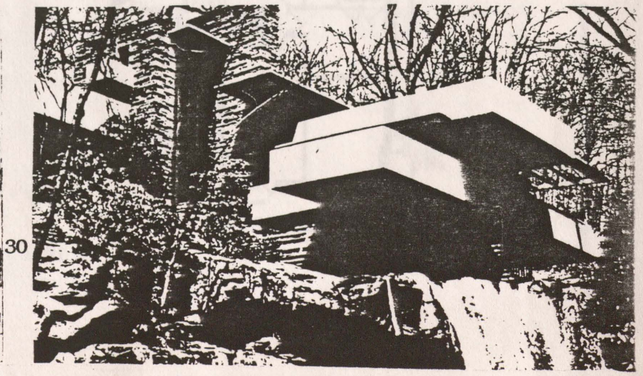
Current owners have done an amazing job of adapting house to use by family with three young children. Basement was enlarged by hand digging, to provide needed indoor play space. The use of a compatible wood deck in rear, children's play equipment where a small garage once stood, a tiny garden and privacy arbor all show that a 1909 house can be adapted for livable use by a contemporary family more than eighty years after construction. One of the most clever solutions to the problem of an awkwardly placed roof drain (common on many, if not most, Wright houses) has been solved by surrounding a deck bench with large rocks over a French drain in the middle of the new wood deck. This provides protection of persons using the deck from a waterfall or winter icycle. As photographs show, this "small masterpiece," as referenced by Henry-Russell Hitchcock, was built and still appears as near to the Wasmuth drawing as any to be found.

SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: A utility pole is placed in an unfortunate location within the yard very close to the rear deck. The installation of underground wiring would be an easy solution to this intrusion. Planter boxes in a dry location under the broad overhangs are barren of cascading vines, due to the difficulty of watering. A drip irrigation system of small plastic water lines would be an inexpensive solution here, and at other Wright residences with a like problem.

The small rear yard is being stressed by too many plants. Attention to harmony, scale, and simplicity of plant materials could make this property a "10.0."

A WRIGHT REMARK: Once, when someone suggested that the Gale house might be called the poor man's Fallingwater, Wright was said to have replied, "No. Fallingwater is the rich man's Gale House."





TAFEL CLV LANDHAUS FÜR FRAU CARL W. WRIGHT OAK PARK, ILL.
GRUNDRISS DER SCHLAFZIMMER
KÜCHE
SPEISEZIMMER
HINTER EINTRITT
EMPFANGS ZIMMER
HALLE
ZWEI STUFEN
WOHNZIMMER
TERRASSE
DIENERIN
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KLEIDER
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SCHLAFZIMMER
BALKON
GEDRUCKT UND VERLEGT VON ERNST WASMUTH A.-G. BERLIN

CASE STUDY S-128 **Site Evaluation Score: 9.8**

Original Owners: F. F. Tomek
Address: Riverside, IL
Type: Prairie
Current Owner/Occupant: Maya Moran

DesignedBuilt: 1907 Restored: 1987
Orientation: Southeast

Supervised by: Barry Byrne

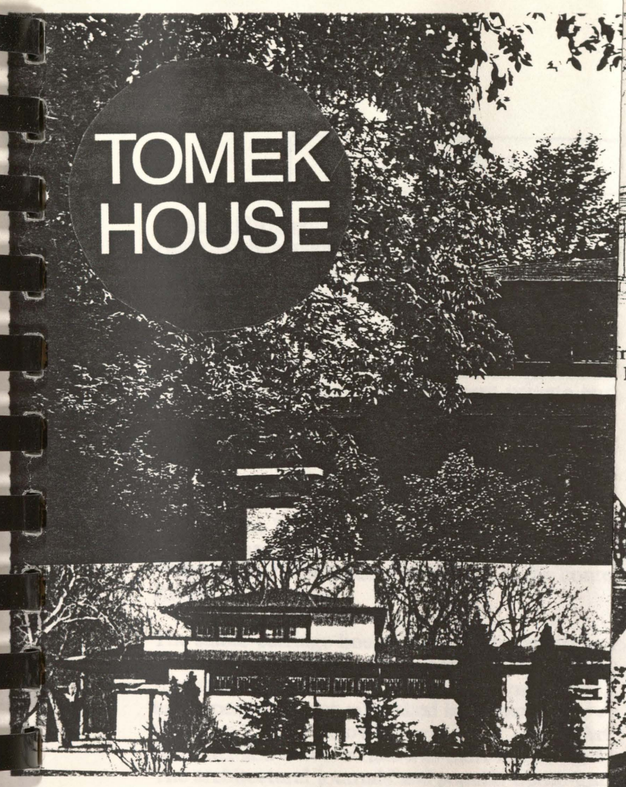
BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: Large site with outstanding prairie house set far back on north property line for excellent solar orientation. It has one of the largest front yards of any Wright property, further facing a public common designed into the Riverside Community by F. L. Olmsted, Sr. Open porch projects into yard on east, giving the effect of a bow of a ship. It must have been even more dramatic before piers were added to support the cantilevered roof. Cantilevered eaves on west end rival the Robie House, built the following year. This is the only prairie house investigated where the owner has made a serious, research based attempt to create not one, but a series of prairie style gardens. The entry garden (5' x 85') encourages a slow and pleasant approach to the front door and is designed to be enjoyed from the bank of south facing windows from the raised living space, as well as from the descending staircase upon leaving. Public and private zones, strategic plantings for accent or screening together with terraces, verandas, and a planted master bedroom deck clearly mark this as *the* classic example of a client understanding how to obtain maximum use, privacy, and family functions as Wright intended by his prairie house philosophy. While growing boys were living in the home, the large lawn served as a playfield, with the hazard of footballs in the perennial beds being minimized by strategically placed trees and shrubs serving as a backstop. The well-thought-out and executed plan, although labor intensive, proves that the typical registered landscape architect could not necessarily match the skills of an artist whose avocation is gardening and who is aware of the changing light, viewing angles, seasonal cycles, and sensory experiences that can only come by living in and *experiencing* a Wright-design residence.

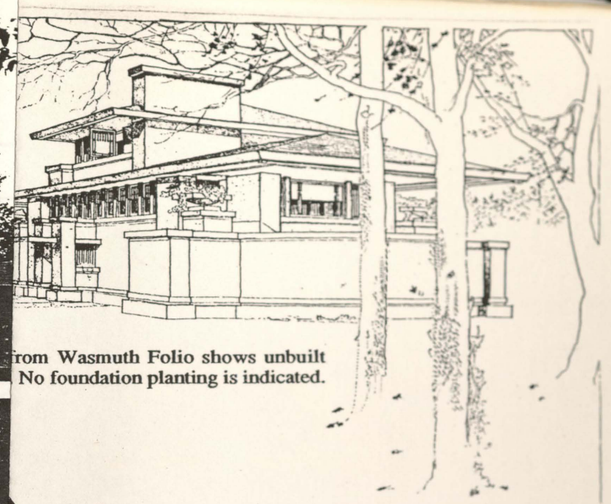
SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: Very minor, compared to condition of a decade or more ago. Heavy dependence upon perennials, annuals, and biennials presents a down side. Not only is maintenance and hand labor intensive, but "continuous bloom" is climatically impossible in northern Illinois, resulting in months of bare or mulched spaces during the long winter.when there is no snow. This off-season disadvantage causes this to fall just below a "10.0," but still rated in the "excellent" column and is the most accurate portrayal in existence of Wright's original intent for landscape design.

COMMENTS BY CURRENT OWNER: "Wright's influence, so easily discernible inside the building, extends beyond the entrance to the outdoors to a greater degree than is generally recognized.....he left his mark beyond the walls, placing demands on the horticultural furnishings as well. While the village ordinance required a setback of 30 feet, Wright placed the house back 100 feet to leave this great amount of space for air and sunlight on the south side.....the garden had to relate to the house, and I began to realize that Wright was influencing me in the selection of materials. A preference for certain patterns, shapes, and colors for use in the interior, as well as the exterior of the building, began to manifest itself. Viewing the plants from above led to a greater emphasis on leaf and flower shapes. Thus, the choice of plant materials became very much influenced by Wright's house. As the gardening work progressed, the lawn became less and the garden more. Drying flowers (for indoor use) has become a household habit, thanks to Wright's penchant for decorative ornaments. No matter the season, even the casual visitor to the Tamek House senses one of Wright's aims has been achieved: a harmonious blending of architecture and nature."

Note: The above comments combine excerpts from a two-hour interview and an article by Ms. Moran published in Inland Architect, entitled "In the Garden with Frank Lloyd Wright." Ms. Moran has written a book on the Tomek House which she hopes to see published in the near future.

TOMEK HOUSE

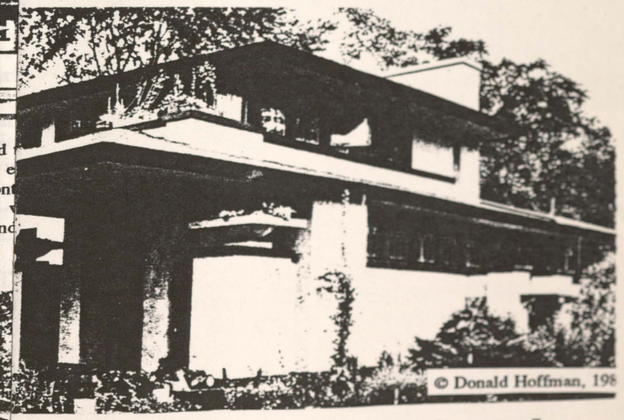




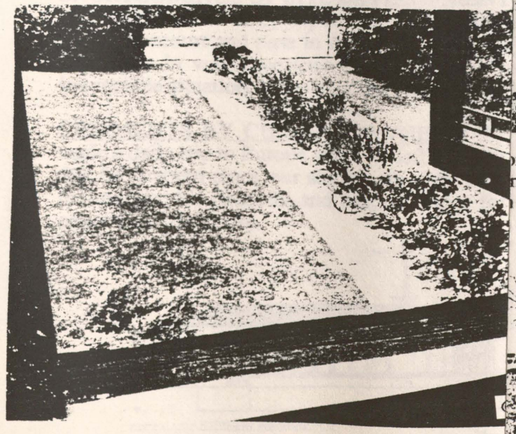
rom Wasmuth Folio shows unbuilt
No foundation planting is indicated.

Insert shows historical view of porch without foundation plantings, and before piers were added to support cantilevered roof.

Those that existed prior to the past ten or twelve years included
junipers and a hodge-podge of plants stuck here and there by e
pruning and removal of the "jungle" that had become out of cont
beautiful home, as Wright intended. this exterior ambience
Mediterranean villa additions and stucco replacement inside and
1988 still show the overgrown landscape features.



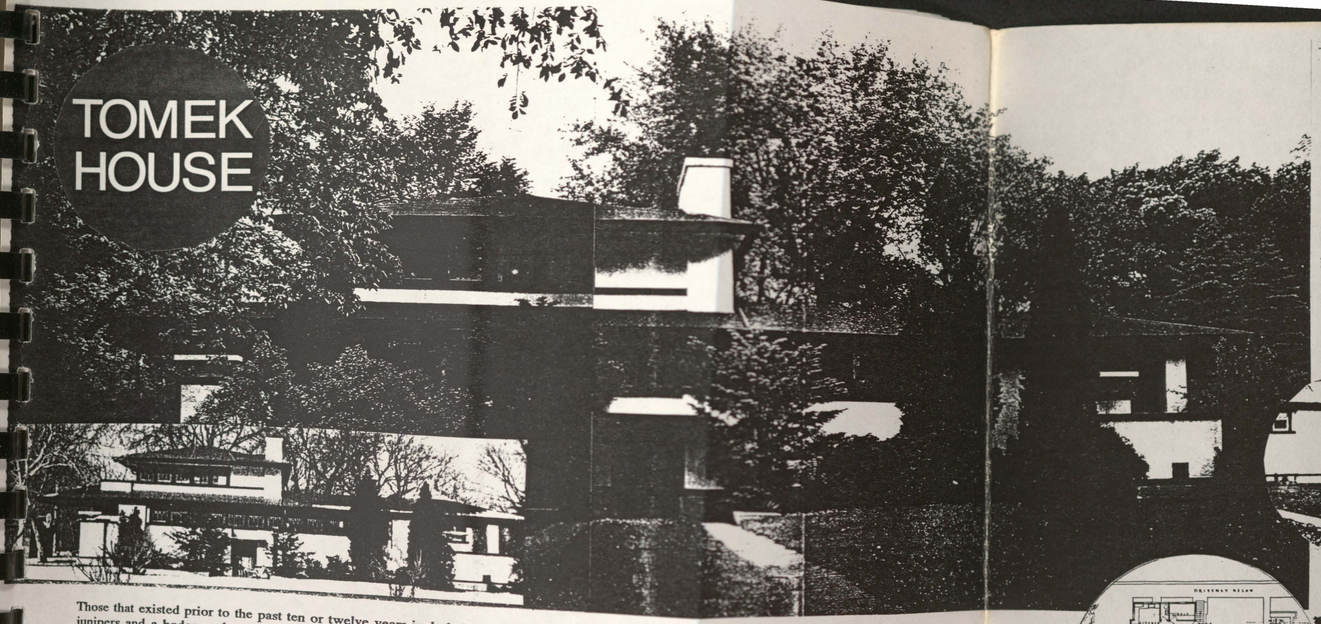
orner of house shows dramatic cantilevered roof, large urns, flower
rning glory vines on balcony off master bedroom, and prairie-style
current landscape design.



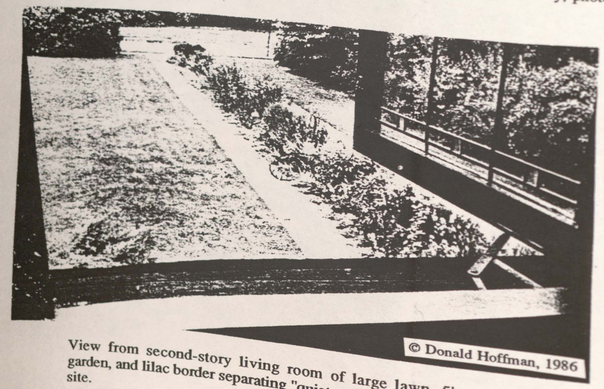
View from second-story living room of large la
garden, and lilac border separating

After pruning.

TOMEK HOUSE

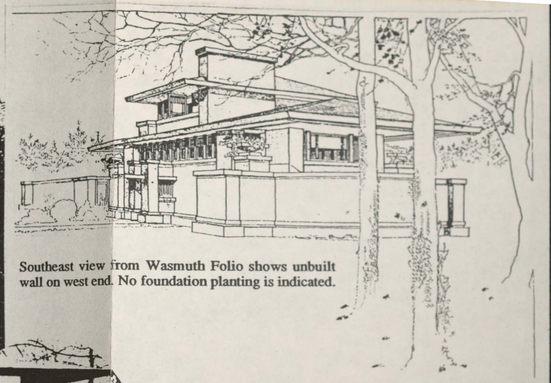


Those that existed prior to the past ten or twelve years included the common problems of overgrown plantings, especially dense junipers and a hodge-podge of plants stuck here and there by earlier owners and birds. This family had to undertake drastic pruning and removal of the "jungle" that had become out of control over an eighty-year history in order to restore views of this beautiful home, as Wright intended. this exterior ambience was considered as important as the removal of inappropriate Mediterranean villa additions and stucco replacement inside and out. Unfortunately, photos of the house published as late as 1988 still show the overgrown landscape features.



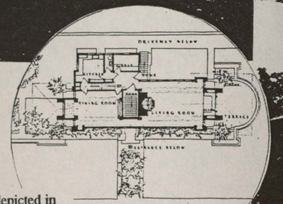
© Donald Hoffman, 1986

View from second-story living room of large lawn, 5' x 85' entry garden, and lilac border separating "quiet garden" in southwest corner of site.

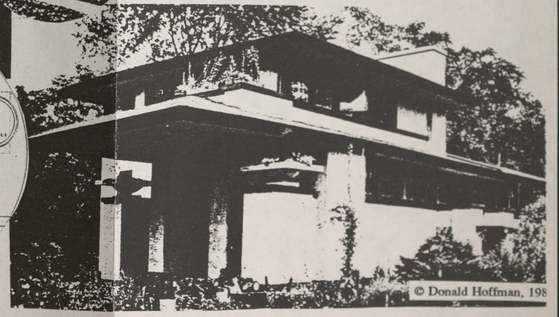


Southeast view from Wasmuth Folio shows unbuilt wall on west end. No foundation planting is indicated.

Insert shows historical view of porch without foundation plantings, and before piers were added to support cantilevered roof.

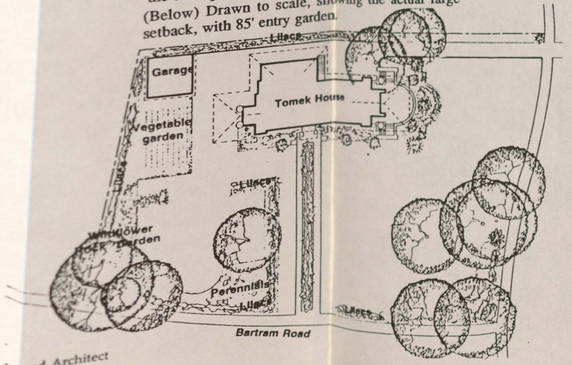


Insert (top) suggests a small front yard, as depicted in the often published Wasmuth Folio drawing, (Below) Drawn to scale, showing the actual large setback, with 85' entry garden.

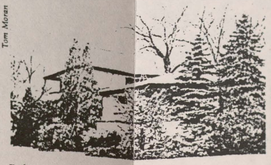


© Donald Hoffman, 198

Southwest corner of house shows dramatic cantilevered roof, large urns, flower box with morning glory vines on balcony off master bedroom, and prairie-style plants used in current landscape design.



Tim Murray



Before pruning.

Tim Murray

After pruning.

CASE STUDY S-135 **Site Evaluation Score: 9.6**

Original Owners: Avery Coonley
Address: Riverside, IL
Type: Prairie House Stable-Coach House
Current Owner/Occupant: James & Carolyn Howlett

DesignedBuilt: 1907 Stable Remodeling: 1953
Orientation: North

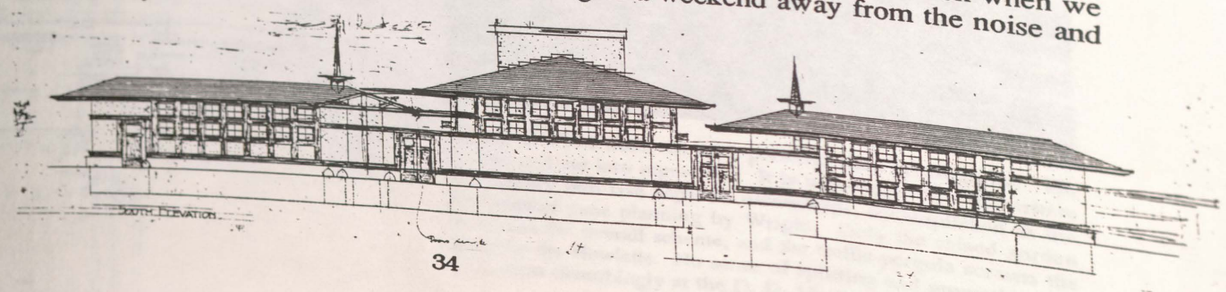
BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: Part of a large superblock that remains for the masterpiece Coonley Estate, at most private end of Olmsted and Vaux's Riverside garden suburb of 1869. Property adjoins an extensive greenway and park along the Des Plaines River. Many existing large trees preserved in cluster layout of three separate building complexes. Jens Jensen has been credited with the landscape, but formal garden spaces are clearly Wright--not Jensen. A private park, now built up with houses, might have been the work of Jens Jensen.

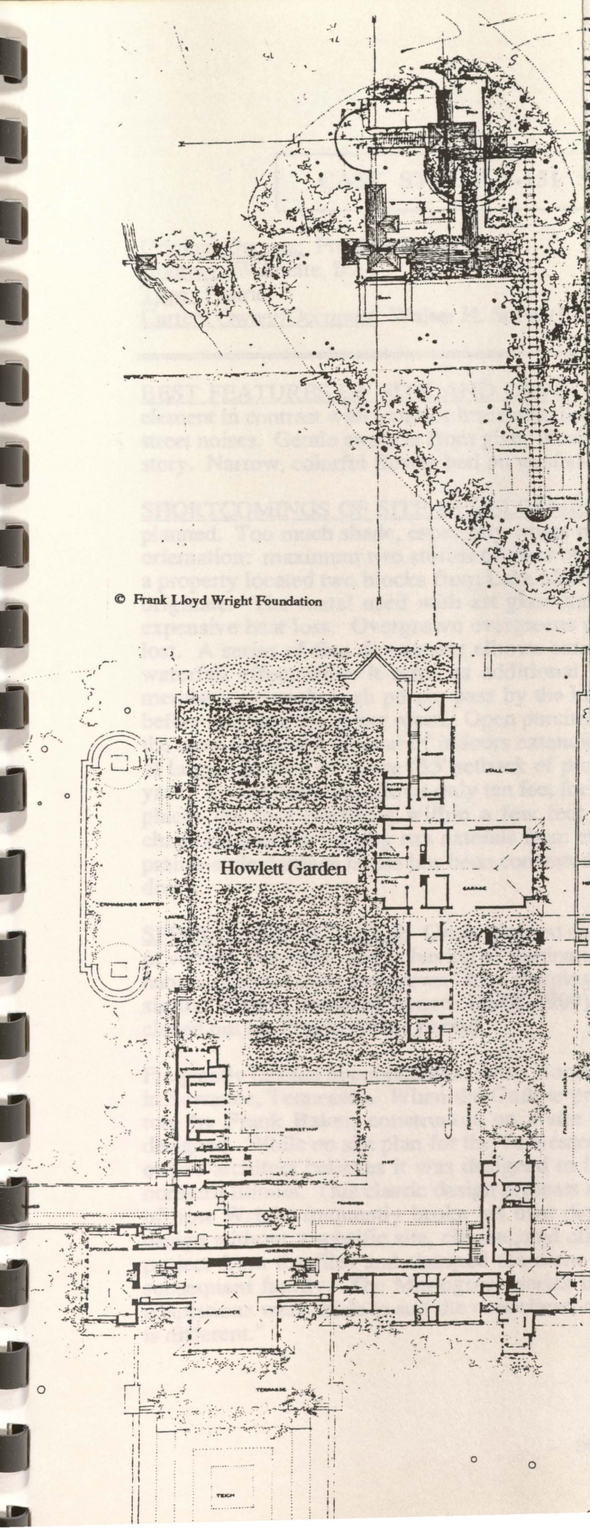
This may be Wright's greatest example of site planning, and can only be topped by Taliesin which was started four years later. The evaluation of the site plan is documented in three stages of sketches by Wright, all of which show sensitivity to the context of the site, especially in relation to the Des Plaines River.

The stable-carriage house and sunken garden have been adapted by the artist-owners into a charming home and sculpture garden that must consititute the best example of adaptive reuse of any Wright structure in America. "The Fable of Our Stable," an interesting story by the owners of their adaptive use experience, was published in *Western Arts Association Bulletin* in March, 1957. Now retired, at that time Carolyn Howlett was Head of the Art Education Department, School of the Chicago Art Institute, and Jim Howlett was Staff Artist (and photographer) of the *Chicago American* newspaper. The architectural journals and popular home-garden magazines also featured their property in several articles in the mid-1950s. Although more intimate and with several surprise features that must be experienced in slow stages, the Howlett garden is every bit as charming and is in a far better condition than the famous pool and garden features of the main house. Original plastered walls and an extensive restored pergola system tie together the cluster of buildings so that this property still has a unified appearance, rather than a property of five separate ownerships.

SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: The only unbecoming aspect of the Carriage House conversion is the "entry experience." To reach the front entrance, it is necessary to cross over a large paved forecourt and pass in front of a very wide double garage door. This opening is screened and kept open in warm weather to obtain good ventilation through the house. This feature, not an irreversible situation, is the only reason the site evaluation score did not rate a "10.0."

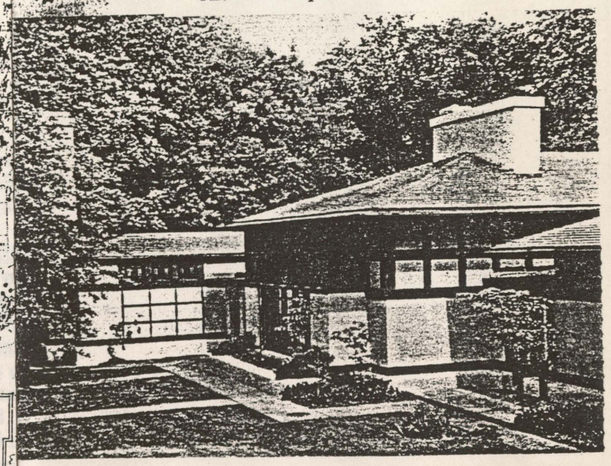
COMMENTS BY CURRENT OWNERS: "Working in downtown Chicago, we both felt like we made a daily trip to Europe when we left the train at the Riverside station each evening. We have taken this for granted since our studios are now in the home, but it was like going on vacation when we returned to this peaceful and beautiful spot for an evening or a weekend away from the noise and congestion of the city."





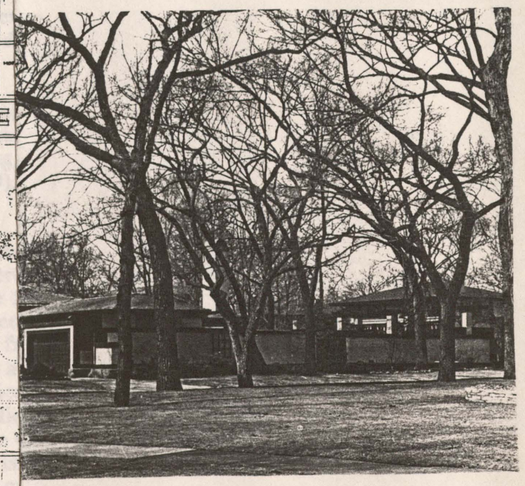
© Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

Artwork and photos, courtesy of Jim Howlett

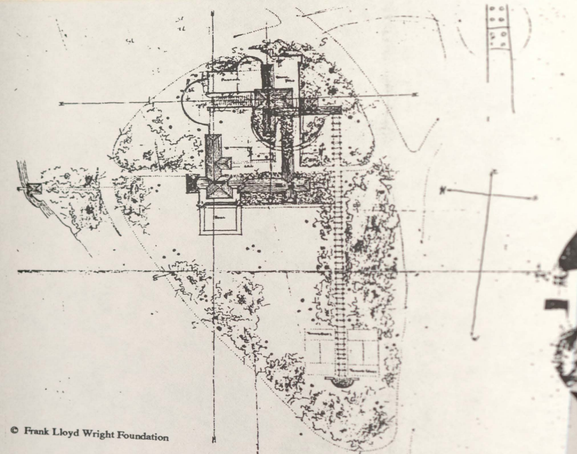


Sunken Garden and Stable--Coach House

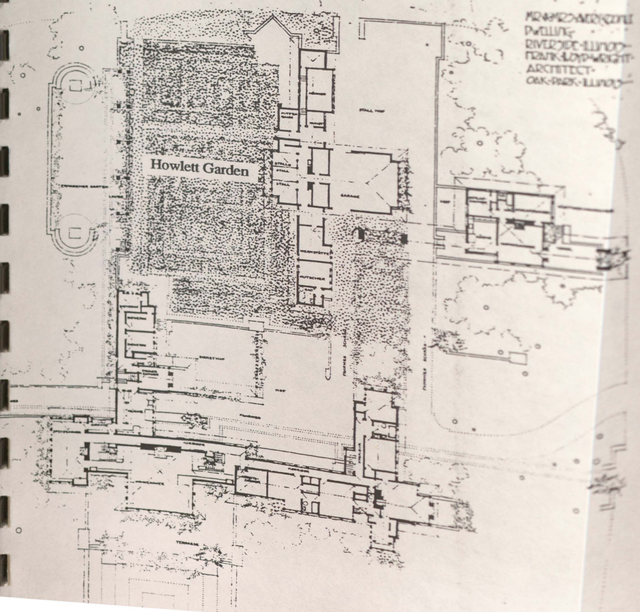
Coonley Estate -- Riverside, Illinois

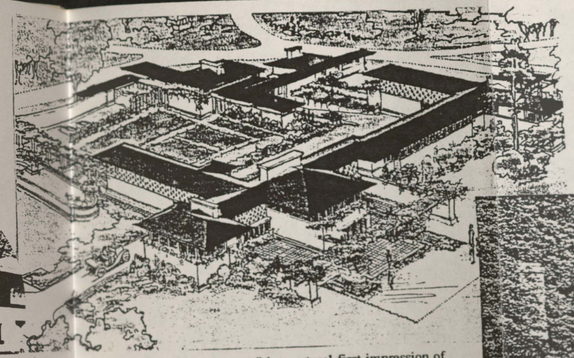


r from the facts observed on a personal field investigation. He so split and cut into segments." It is unfortunate that all writers he property into five separate ownerships, accomplished in the the original zone planning by Wright. Only the raised garden tively fits the overall scheme, and the trellis-pergola screens the igned by the Howletts. No sense of splitting and separation into rties, most disturbingly at the D. D. Martin Estate in Buffalo.



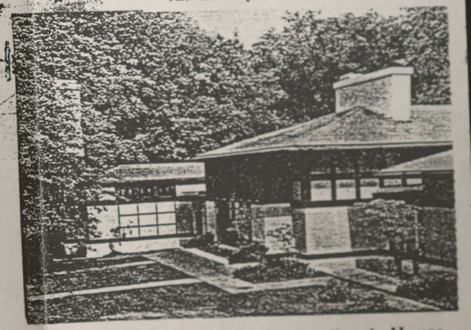
© Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation





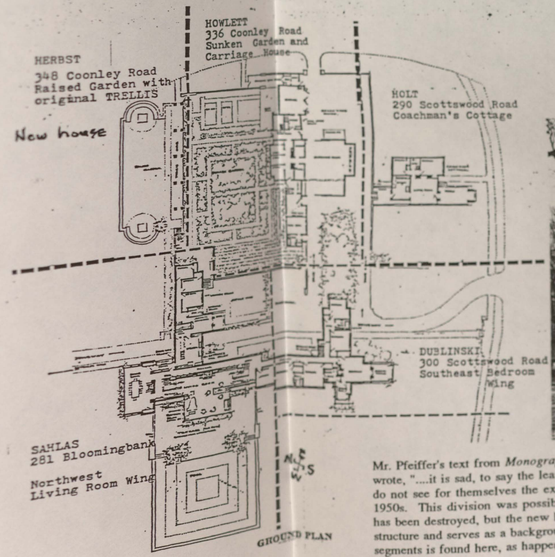
"Like a trip to Japan" is a natural first impression of visiting the converted carriage house, with abstract patterns created by Wright many years before the artist Piet Mondrian contributed similar surface treatment to the "International Style" architecture.

Artwork and photos, courtesy of Jim Howlett



Sunken Garden and Stable--Coach House

Coonley Estate -- Riverside, Illinois



Mr. Pfeiffer's text from *Monograph 3* (1988) could not be further from the facts observed on a personal field investigation. He wrote, "....it is sad, to say the least, to see this once great entity so split and cut into segments." It is unfortunate that all writers do not see for themselves the excellent and clever division of the property into five separate ownerships, accomplished in the 1950s. This division was possible, of course, only because of the original zone planning by Wright. Only the raised garden has been destroyed, but the new house added at this corner sensitively fits the overall scheme, and the trellis-pergola screens the structure and serves as a background for the sunken garden redesigned by the Howletts. No sense of splitting and separation into segments is found here, as happened at many other Wright properties, most disturbingly at the D. D. Martin Estate in Buffalo.

CASE STUDY S-151 Site Evaluation Score: 6.3

Original Owners: Frank J. Baker
Address: Wilmette, IL
Type: Prairie
Current Owner/Occupant: Walter H. Sobel (FAIA)

DesignedBuilt: 1908 Addition: 1921
(for Tennessee site)
Orientation: North. Major glass two stories tall. Upper and side glazing East and West.

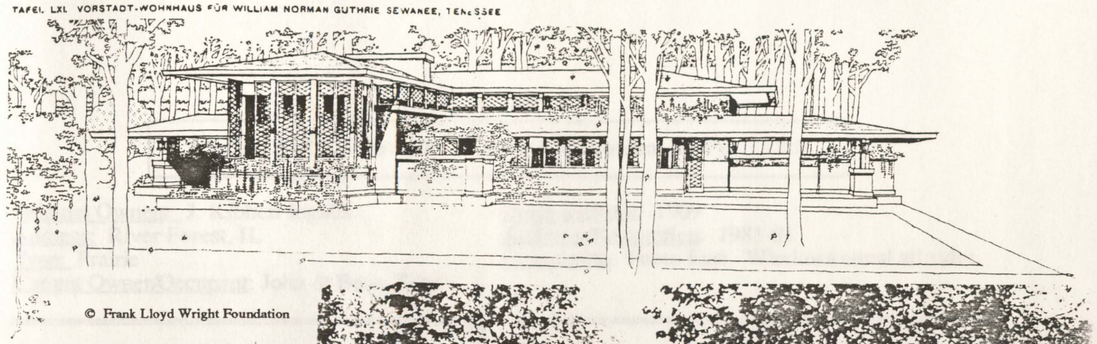
BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: Large trees for shade and needed vertical element in contrast with exterior horizontal lines of structure. Evergreens in front help block out busy street noises. Gentle swale at front gives illusion of even less height. Two-story house appears as one story. Narrow, colorful flower bed on west side of driveway, the pride of owners.

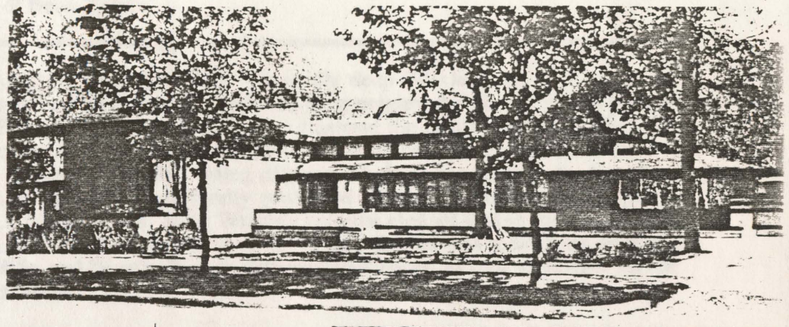
SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: Flower box extension in front only partly built as planned. Too much shade, especially where needed on south (rear). House given the worst possible orientation: maximum two stories of glass on north side, also on northeast and northwest corners, on a property located two blocks from Lake Michigan, from which notorious northeasterly winter winds originate. The metal used with art glass has loosened after 82 years, creating winter drafts and expensive heat loss. Overgrown evergreens crowd sidewalk so that designed "entry experience" is lost. A series of five downspout elbows extend three feet out from gutter, creating a 70-foot wide waterfall effect when it rains as additional obstruction to front door. Most guests, like family members, enter through porch, pass by the kitchen doorway, and proceed through the dining room before reaching the living room. Open porches on both ends of house have been enclosed, destroying the most important illusion of indoors extending outward, and outdoors inward. Eighty-foot setback of largest portion of house (55' setback of projecting living room) reduces size and function of rear yard. A west side yard allows only ten feet for driveway and garden, and the east side yard of five feet places the roof overhang within a few feet from the neighboring house. Unsightly galvanized chainlink fencing for dog run extends from end of porch and divides the rear yard. An interesting prairie-style carriage house has been converted to garage with apartment above and is particularly run down.

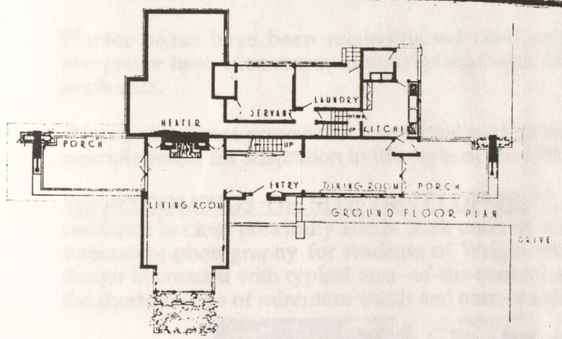
SPECIAL IMPORTANCE: Grant Manson described the house as "an extreme example of reduction of vertical elements" and as having a "fascinating articulation of its surfaces, the sense that it gives of a natural organism that has grown like a creeping plant." The Baker residence is the largest of a series of similar Wright designed houses (1908-1909), completed shortly before Wright left Oak Park and closed out his Prairie House period.

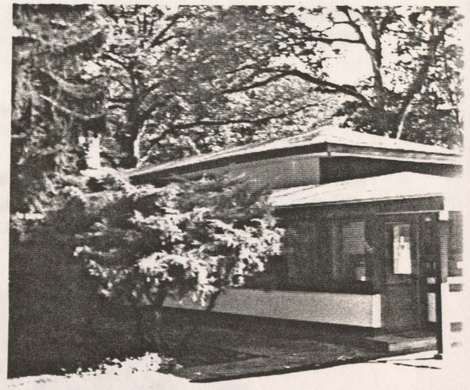
Frequently labeled in publications as the Norman Guthrie Residence, the design was to have been built in Sewanee, Tennessee. When the Guthrie project fell through, it was presented to and accepted en toto by Frank Baker, constructed on a site 500 miles due north from the one for which it was designed. While no site plan for the Tennessee site can be found in the Taliesin Archives, the current owner-architect believes it was designed to face south, rather than due north as it was oriented in northern Illinois. This classic design presents a textbook example of the importance of orientation and of how Wright frequently broke his own dictums, when he said it was impossible to organically design without a specific site, climate, and client. This may be the first time that he took an unbuilt project from the files and changed the name on the title block, suggesting it was designed for the subsequent family. The Monograph series is repleat with other examples, although usually some adaptations were made to suit the new client, causing the Archivest to insist that "every Wright house is different."

TAFEL LXI VORSTADT-WOHNHAUS FÜR WILLIAM NORMAN GUTHRIE SEWANEE, TENESSEE









Norman Guthrie plan was built in 1908 for Frank J. Baker in Wilmette, Illinois--500 miles due north from original site in Tennessee. Little or no change, other than orientation. As constructed, the Baker residence is oriented north, rather than south as it was designed, and is situated on a busy street a few blocks west of Lake Michigan. Current photographs show how the porch has been enclosed with glass, as well as the overgrown/crowded condition of evergreens, which causes most visitors to use the porch entrance, rather than the attractive front entry.

Photos of porch entrance and exterior west wall of living room courtesy of owner, Walter H. Sobel FAIA.

CASE STUDY S-161 Site Evaluation Score: 10.0

Original Owners: J. Kibben Ingalls
Address: River Forest, IL
Type: Prairie
Current Owner/Occupant: John & Betty Tilton

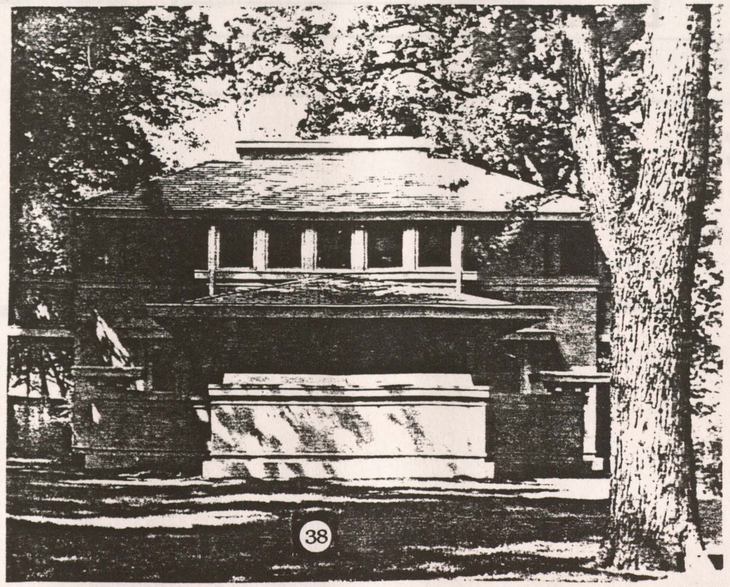
DesignedBuilt: 1909
Addition/Restoration: 1981-91
Orientation: Faces East. Windows equal all sides.

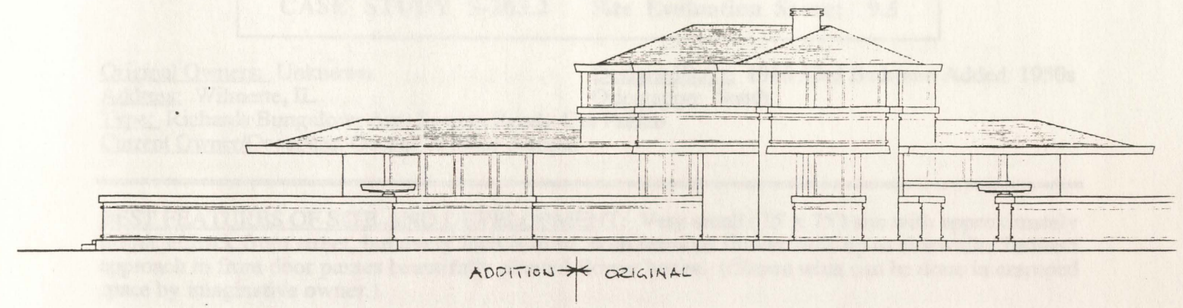
BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: Unusually deep (330 feet) lot, with minimum width (55 feet), located midway in heavily forested, two-block-long neighborhood. Street was planted with four rows of American Elms that, remarkably, have withstood the blight that eradicated this species from streets of entire communities throughout Illinois. Open-covered terrace juts out beyond setback line (150 feet) of other houses, giving the feeling of being all alone in a large park. Excellent restoration and major addition has added a large family room and super-size terrace on rear, partly sheltered by roof overhang. All is in harmony with Wright's original elegant design, complete with reproduction art glass windows, and careful attention to every detail. Owner was restoration architect for Meyer May, Zimmerman, Hills, and Beechy Wright-designed residences, as well as advisor for the restoration of FLLW Home and Studio.

Planter boxes have been reconstructed from original plans and properly planted. Overgrown evergreens have been removed and replaced with dwarf varieties. Shade garden has been installed on north side.

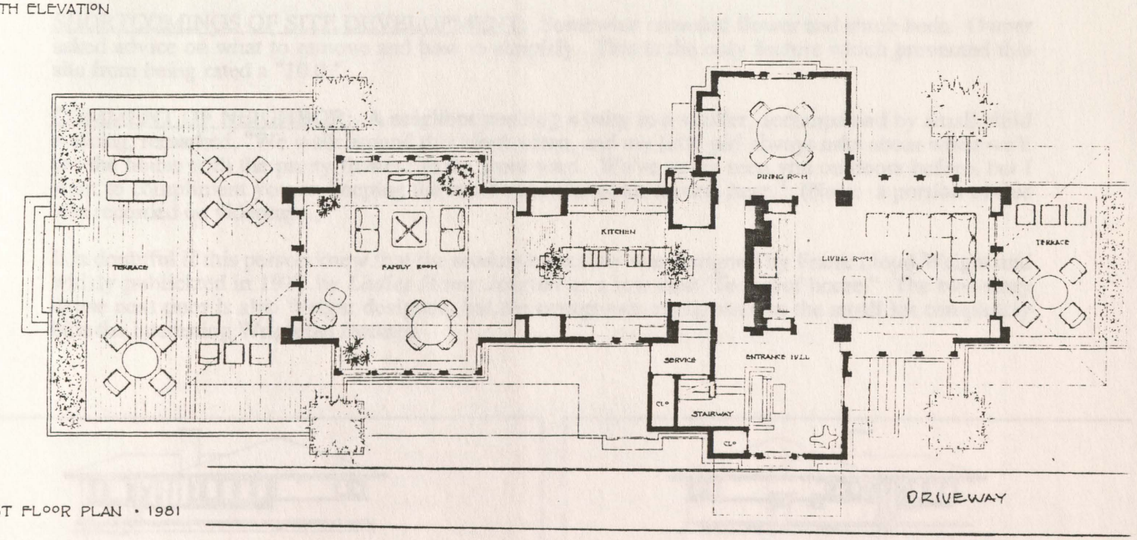
Overall excellence proves that a sensitive professional can follow Wright's design intent. This is best example found for adaptation to life-style of the 1990s in the "Wright" way.

SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: None to be found. Narrow width of lot places residence in close proximity and in stark contrast with neighboring historic houses, but this makes for interesting photography for students of Wright who are able to study the virtues of Prairie House design in contrast with typical turn--of-the-century architecture. The unique depth of lot makes up for the shortcomings of minimum width and narrow side yards.





SOUTH ELEVATION



FIRST FLOOR PLAN · 1981

Tilton+Lewis Associates, Inc.
333 West Wacker Drive
Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60606-1225

J. KIBBEN INGALLS HOUSE
RIVER FOREST, ILLINOIS

Ingalls Residence has been documented on videotape. Current still photographs will be added here.

CASE STUDY S-203.2 Site Evaluation Score: 9.5

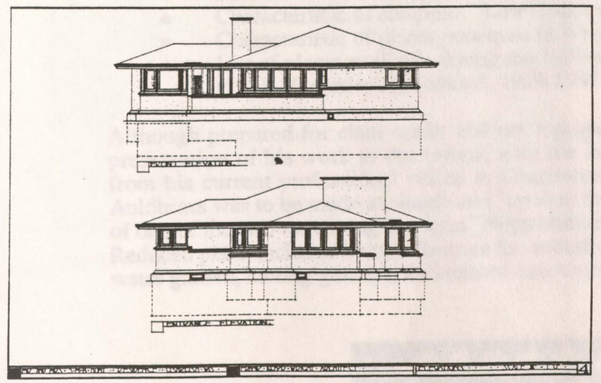
Original Owners: Unknown
DesignedBuilt: 1916 / 3rd Bedroom Added: 1950s
Address: Wilmette, IL
Orientation: South
Type: Richards Bungalow; Am. System Ready-Cut Prefab
Current Owner/Occupant: George & Mary Sample

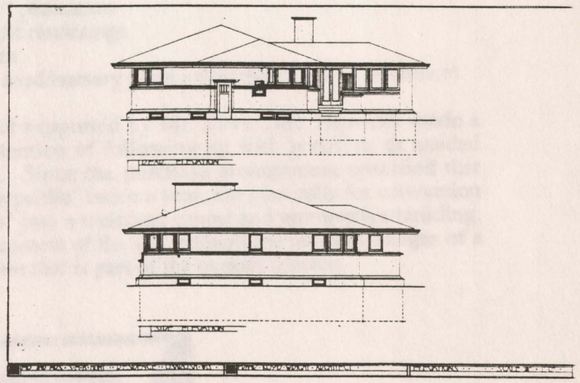
BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: Very small (75' x 75') site with approximately 8-foot setback from street, but every inch is used, with terraced flower beds up to sidewalk. Indirect approach to front door passes beautifully planted flower boxes. (Shows what can be done in cramped space by imaginative owner.)

SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: Somewhat crowded flower and shrub beds. Owner asked advice on what to remove and how to simplify. This is the only feature which prevented this site from being rated a "10.0."

COMMENT OF NEIGHBOR: A neighbor pushing a baby in a stroller, accompanied by small child walking, remarked, "We walk around this block often, and my little girl always asks about when we'll see the house with the pretty flowers in the front yard. We've never seen you outdoors before, but I want to compliment you on keeping the most beautiful place around here." (Note: a portion of this was recorded on videotape.)

It is doubtful if this person knew that the modest bungalow was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and widely publicized in 1917 by *Ladies Home Journal* as a low-cost "fireproof home." The two-story house next door is also Wright designed, but the overgrown evergreens on the small lot completely hide the interesting Wrightian features.





CASE STUDY S-261 Site Evaluation Score: 9.6

Original Owners: C. Leigh Stevens
Address: Yemasee, S.C. (Auldbrass Plantation)
Type: Usonian - Hexagon module
Current Owner/Occupant: Joel Silver

DesignedBuilt: 1939 Restored: 1989
Orientation: Northeast

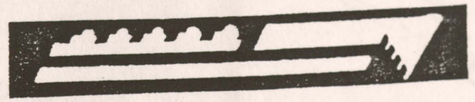
BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: Unlimited open space--55 acres of rice plantation, once more than 1,000 acres in size. Huge live oak trees with Spanish moss inspired Wright's use of one-of-a-kind 80° angled cypress walls for house design, plus copper downspouts and roof with blue-green patina. Swamp of cypress trees has been dammed to create a reflecting lake as part of $2.5-million restoration-reconstruction still underway after two years (supervised by Eric Lloyd Wright and Bennett Strahan). Swimming pool has been built following Wright's plans. Guest house and other unbuilt features are still in planning stage. Complex of buildings interconnected by esplanades to provide additional shade for this hot, humid climate. Extensive road and path system constructed of red rock.

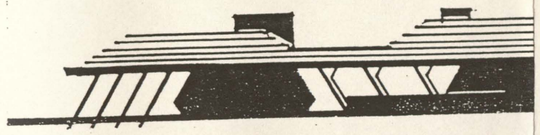
SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: Inappropriate planting placed as edging along pool. Large azaleas have been removed (Note: azaleas possibly were remaining from an earlier landscape plan by Thomas Church). No attention has been given open stream that adjoins the stable and bisects the entire site. No native plant materials have been added, in line with preliminary planting plans of Wright. Oversized entrance out of character with a historic plantation.

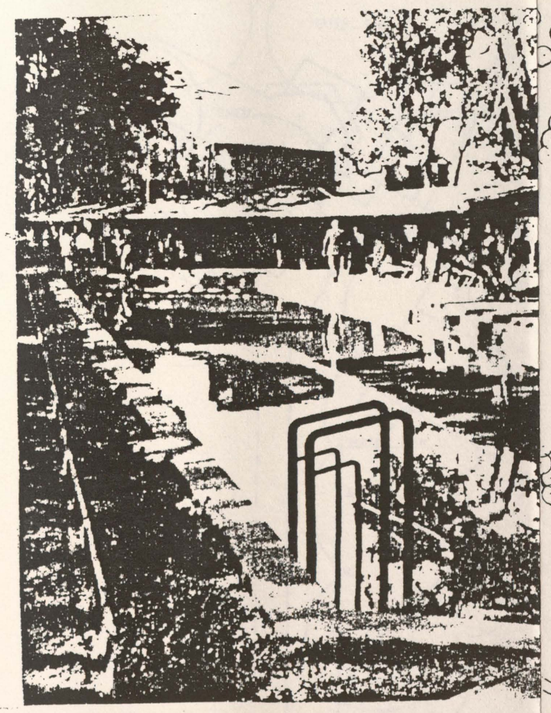
FEATURES OF STUDENT LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Edward A. Browder, developed plans for the property as his final class project prior to graduation from the School of Environmental Design, University of Georgia, Fall 1989. Browder, a native of Charleston, prepared a master plan, site details, and planting plan with a plant palette selected using the following criteria:

- Emphasis on native plant materials
- Suitable to the environmental conditions of the site
- Characteristic of southern, "Low Country" plantation
- Characteristic of plants portrayed in Wright renderings
- Use of plants available during the 1939 era
  (1931-39 gardening books & 1939-1941 seed/nursery plant catalogues used as reference)

Although prepared for class credit and not a project supported by Mr. Silver, Mr. Browder made a presentation of his work to the owner, with the intention of following up with revisions as needed from his current professional office in Charleston. Since the purchase arrangement specified that Auldbrass was to be made available and "open to the public" twice a year, the plan calls for conversion of one of the two remaining hexagon "Negro cabins" into a welcome center and interpretive building. Reduced plans included herein illustrate the overall context of the site, without the detailed designs of a water garden, cutting gardens, and related construction that is part of the overall scheme.





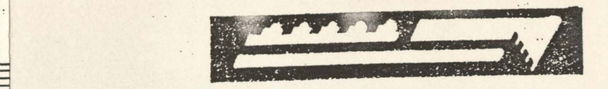


School of Enviraonmental Design
University of Georgia, Athens

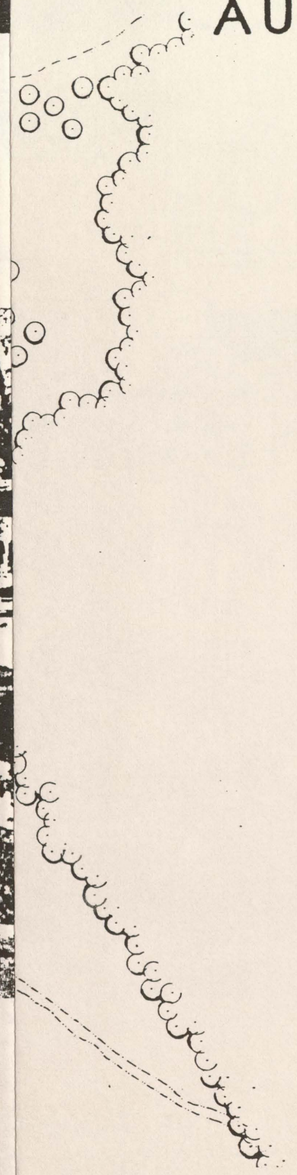
SENIOR DESIGN PROJECT

FALL, 1989
Edward A. Browder

Prof. Charles E. Aguar
Project Director



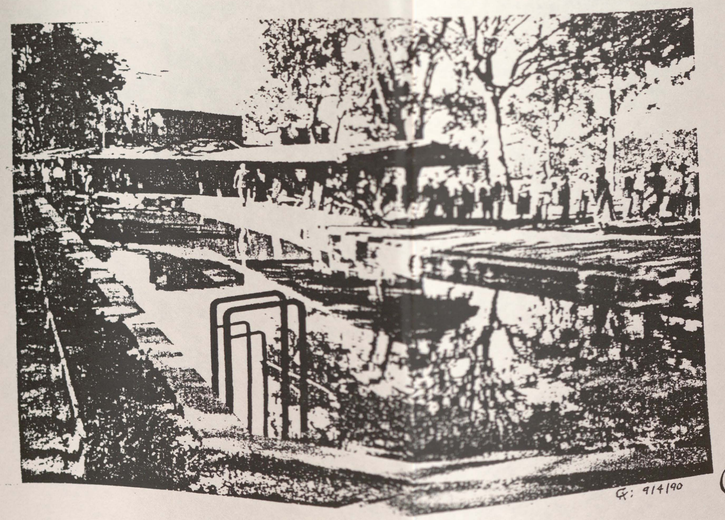
AULDBRASS



Auldbrass Plantation

designed by

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT



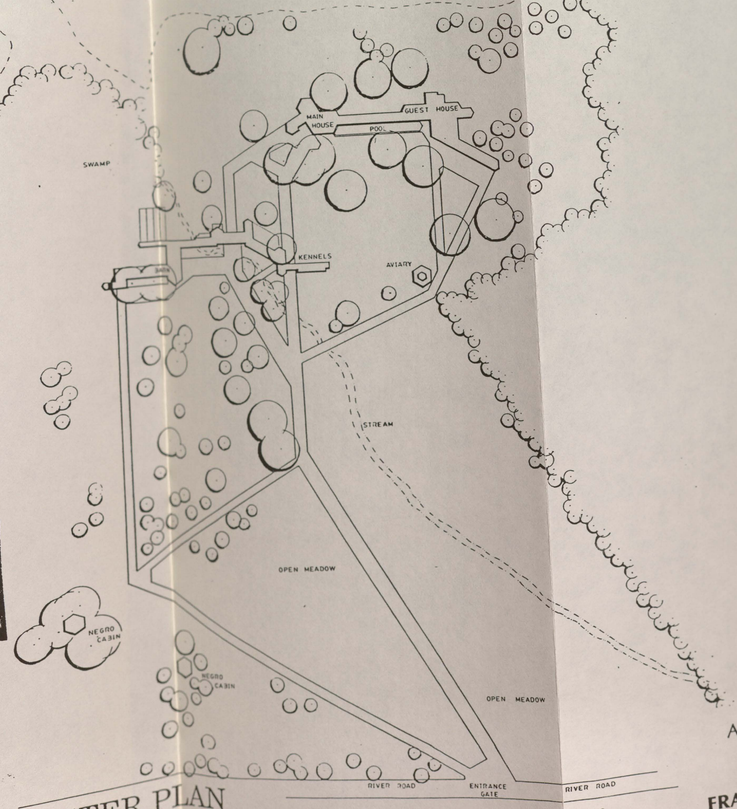
School of Enviraonmental Design
University of Georgia, Athens

SENIOR DESIGN PROJECT

FALL, 1989
Edward A. Browder

OBJECTIVES:

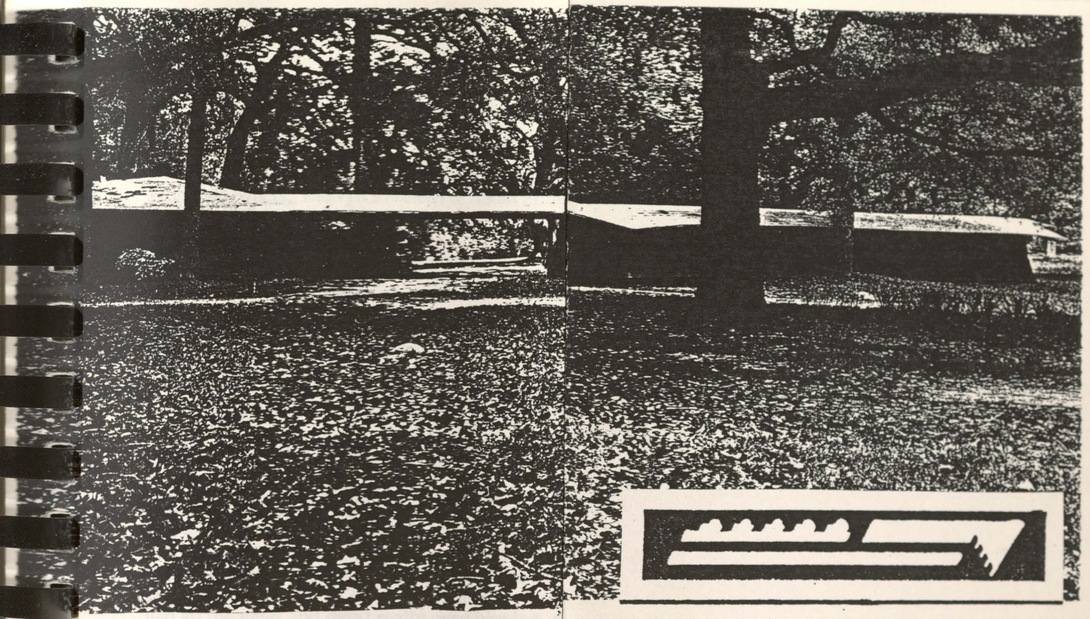
TO CREATE A PLANTING DESIGN THAT FULFILLS FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S INTENTIONS FOR THE AULDBRASS SENSE OF PLACE. TO INCORPORATE A RECEPTION CENTER THAT WILL MEET THE GROWING NEED OF INCREASED VISITORS.



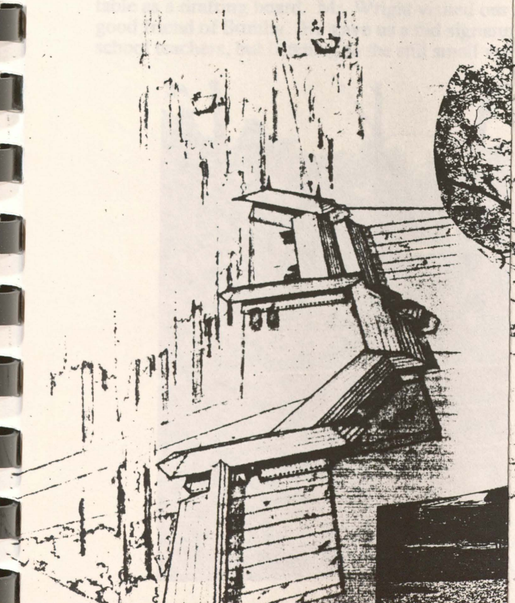
MASTER PLAN

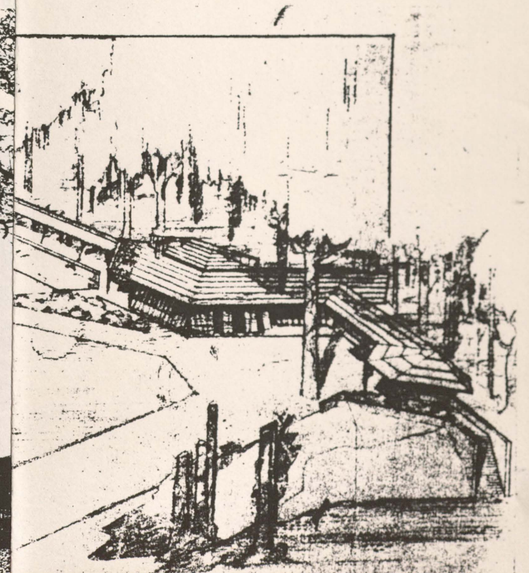
AULDBRASS

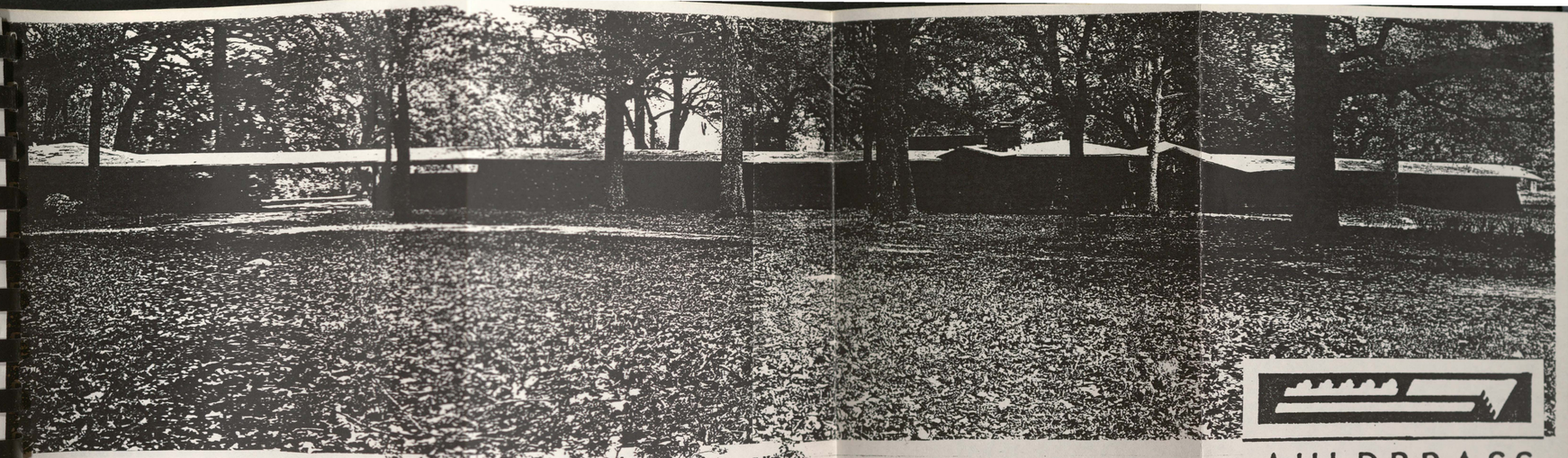
Auldbrass Plantation
designed by
FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT



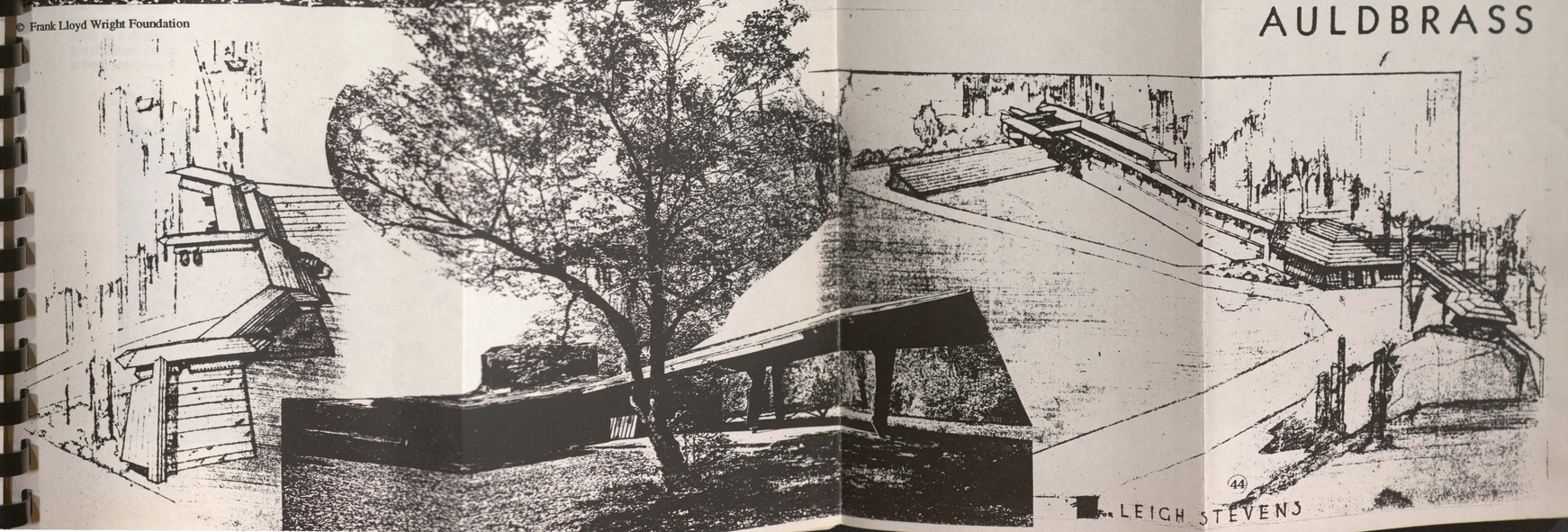
AULDBRASS







AULDBRASS



CASE STUDY S-287 Site Evaluation Score: 10.0

Original Owners: Melvyn Maxwell & Sarah Smith
Address: Bloomfield Hills, MI
Type: Usonian
Current Owner/Occupant: Sarah.Smith

DesignedBuilt: 1946 Expanded: 1969-70
--by Taliesin Associated Architects (TAA)
Orientation: South

BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: Large lot with lake to the south in upper scale wooded neighborhood. Sculpture garden with large environmental pieces is integrated with beautiful landscape designed by Thomas Church. Original washed gravel drive and auto court still maintained. Taliesin Associated Architects (TAA) addition well integrated. Wrightian gate to rear yard is a special touch. Sizable terraces and outdoor living provisions are excellent.

SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: Unable to find any. (See photographs and video)

COMMENTS BY OWNER: "*Myhaven* is a beautiful expression of soul and brings much joy to many people, including myself. It is a reflection of Smithy's thinking. It is his house because everything you see is because of Smithy's persistency and determination which resulted in this 'little gem,' as Mr. Wright called it. There was no site plan from Mr. Wright. Smithy thought Thomas Church was the best landscape artist and that Wright was the best architect. Smithy always went to what he thought was the best; he had an eye for architecture, as well as landscaping design. Mr. Church said Smithy had all the ideas and didn't really need him but, after staying overnight with us, he got up early in the morning, walked the grounds, came indoors, and drew up the landscape plan, using our dining room table as a drafting board. Mr. Wright visited our home three or four times in the 1950s and became a good friend of Smithy. He gave us a red signature tile to place near the entrance. We were only two school teachers, but listening to the still small voice and obeying.....beautiful was the reward."

G: 5/4/91

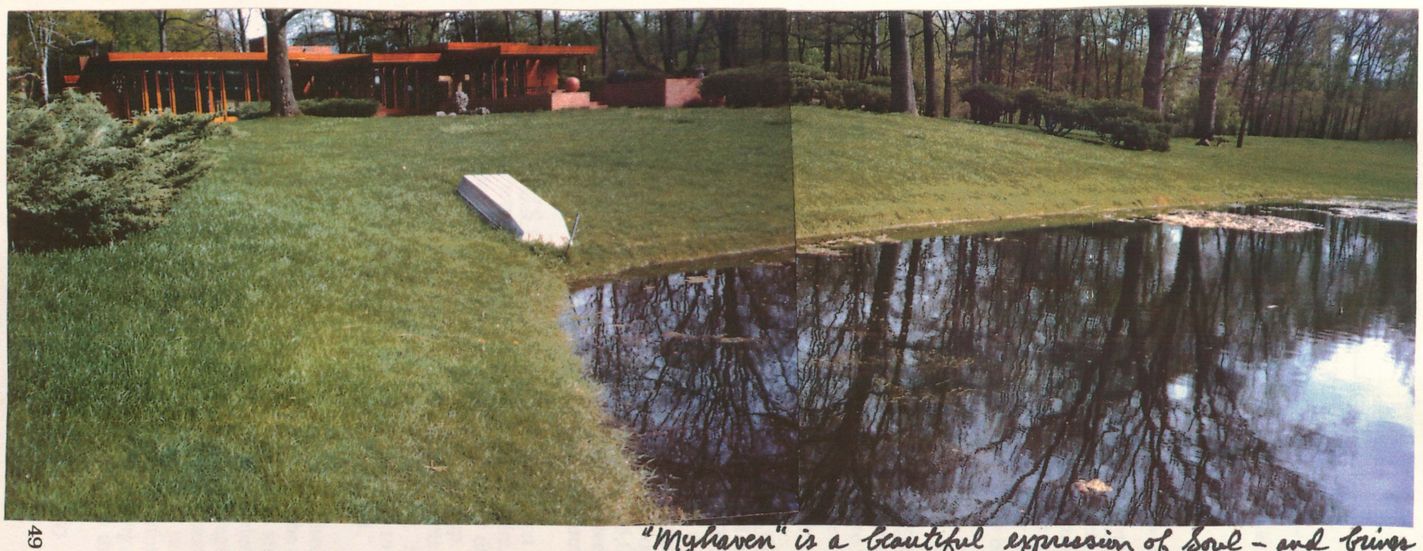
ORIGINAL CLIENT:
MR. and MRS. M.M. SMITH USONIAN RESIDENCE - 1946 - BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MI
THOMAS CHURCH, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

" Myhaven "

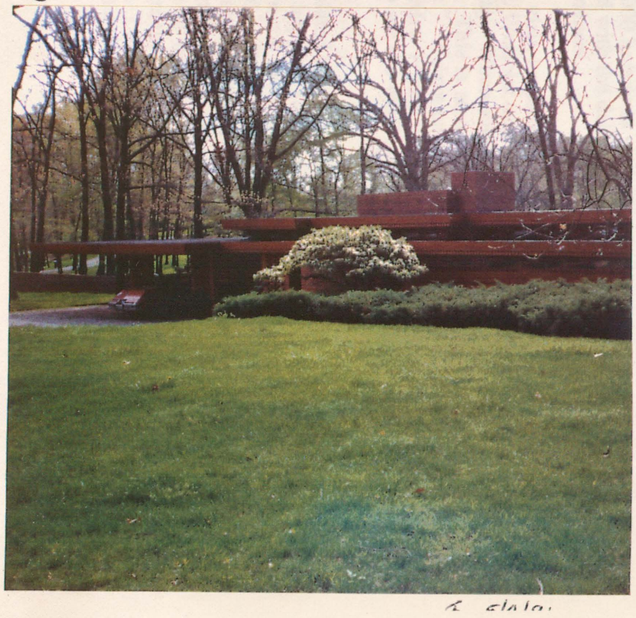
thy thought Thomas
ch was the best landscape
t and that Mr Wright was
best architect .....

.... everything you see is because Smithy's
persistency and determination resulted in this
"little gem" as Mr Wright called it"
Sara Smith 6-8-91

FRANK
LLOYD
WRIGH



"Myhaven" is a beautiful expression of Soul – and brings much joy to many people including myself. Sara Smith



CASE STUDY S-294 Site Evaluation Score: 9.7

Original Owners: Christine & David I. Weisblat
Address: Galesburg, MI ("The Acres")
Type: Textile block and wood / 1-story
Current Owner/Occupant: Christine Weisblat

Designed: 1947-49 Occupied: 1950
Addition: 1961
Orientation: Northwest (ample windows SE)
Supervision by: John H. Howe

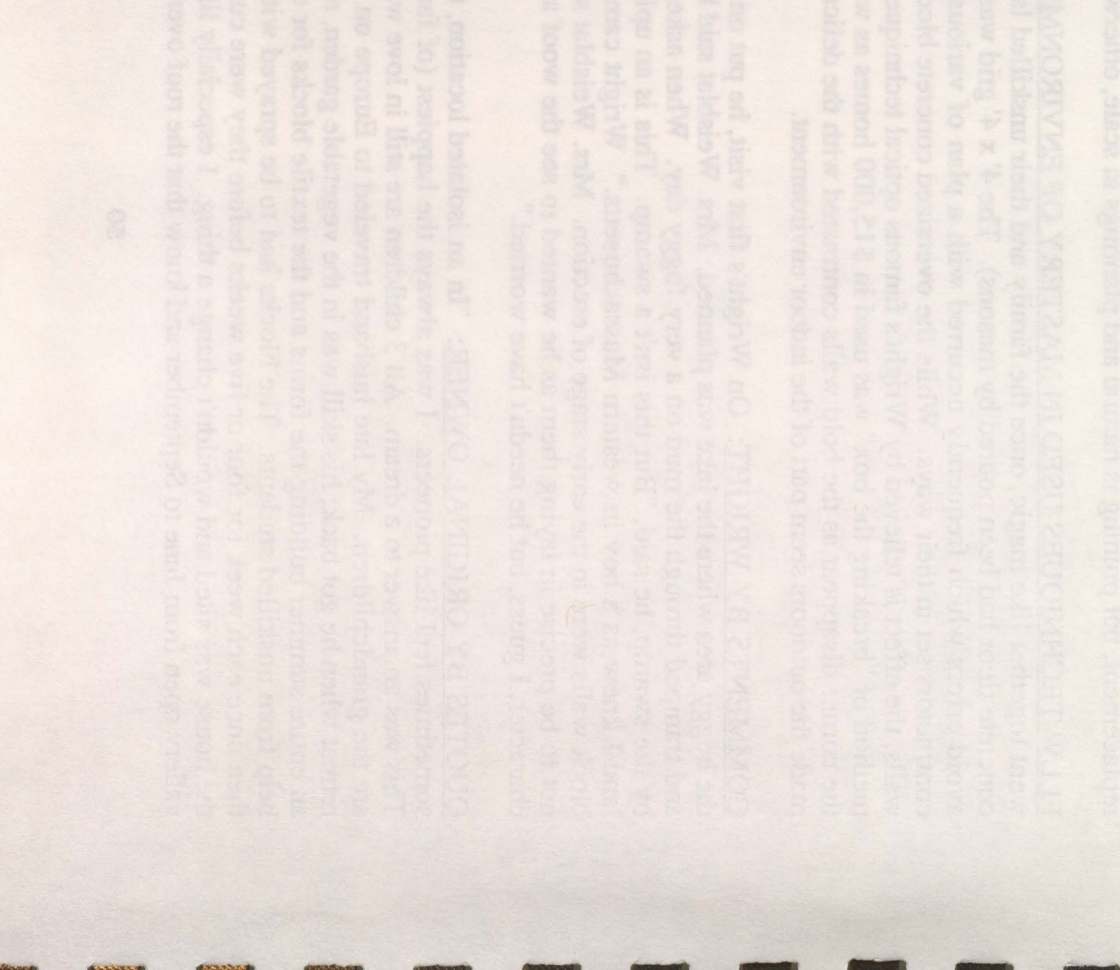
BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: One-acre circular lot furthest removed from public road and other houses affords complete privacy and "hidden" environment backed by deep forest. Broad sloping site is adjacent to community lake, buffered by native Michigan landscape highlighted in spring by redbuds, dogwoods, plum, and apple trees. Low, dry-wall with flowers serves as transition where minimum grading was needed. Circular block wall provides a smaller, more formal lawn space with perennial flower border seen from screened-in porch (labeled "pergola" on plan) off the master bedroom.

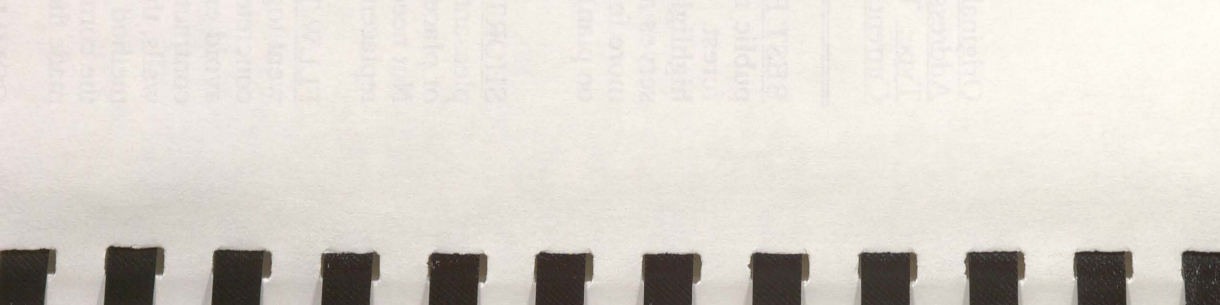
SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: Entry through dark carport does not provide the pleasant entry experience of other Wright houses. Circular, walled lawn with flower border seems out of place and barrier-like, an extraneous feature with such expansive natural beauty in all directions. Not needed for space definition or privacy here. Overgrown junipers along gallery side of house need replacement, but pruning is natural and plantings in scale, otherwise.

FLLW TECHNIQUES USED IN MASTERY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN: The textile blocks went together like magic, once the family and their unskilled laborers mastered the "hand" of it (the concrete floor had been poured by masons). The 4' x 4' grid was another technique used by Wright to avoid errors which frequently occurred with a plan of various dimensions, even if hated by many contractors set in their ways. While the oversized concrete blocks tend to give a heavy look to some walls, the effect is relieved by Wright's famous optical technique, mitered corner glass windows. This method of "breaking the box" was used in $15,000 homes as well as in costly estate homes, making the corner disappear as the bold walls contrasted with the delicate and nearly invisible openings that made the outdoors seem part of the indoor environment.

COMMENTS BY WRIGHT: On Wright's first visit, he put on waders and insisted on walking over the boggy area where the lake was planned. Mrs. Weisblat said he was just ecstatic about the property and tramped through the mud on a very foggy day. When asked if he was not "too inconvenienced" by the swamp, he said, "But this isn't a swamp. This is an upland bog. This is very much like the land I knew as a boy in western Massachusetts." Wright came for the second of two visits as the block walls were in the early stage of erection. Mrs. Weisblat said Wright "....cautioned the workers not to be precise in laying them as he wanted to see the woof and the warp. Texture gave the walls character, I guess, but he needn't have worried."

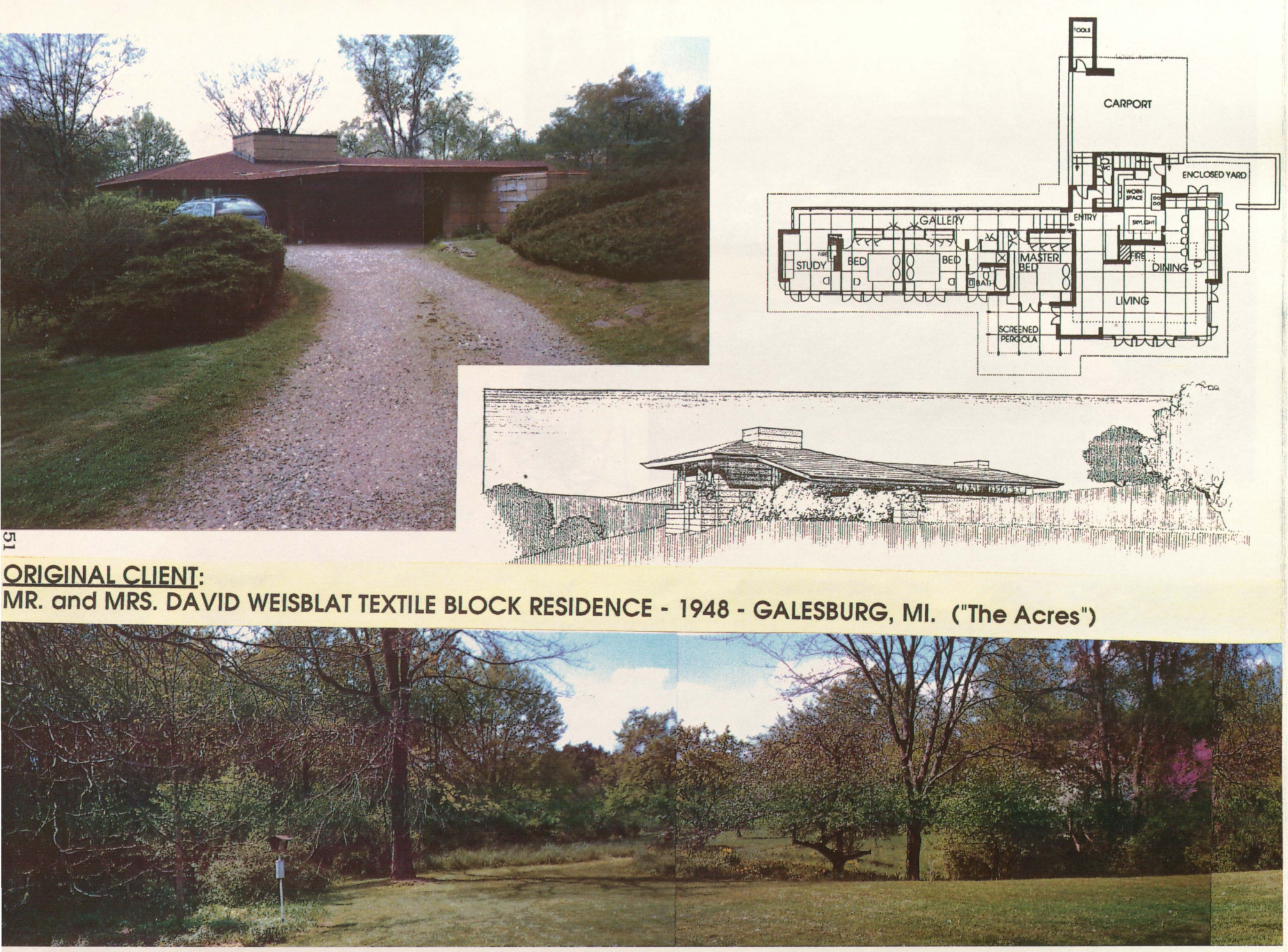
QUOTES BY ORIGINAL OWNER: "In an isolated location, trying a new type of building, we did sometimes feel like pioneers. I was always the happiest (of family of 5) living here in the country. This was an answer to a dream. All 3 children are still in love with this house and the out-of-doors, as are the grandchildren. My late husband traveled to Europe on business quite a bit, but this was his retreat when he got back; his skill was in the vegetable garden, mine with flowering plants. We spent an entire summer building the forms and the textile blocks for our house as a family operation, with help from unskilled students. The blocks had to be sprayed with water each evening for a week and then once each week for four or five weeks before they were cured. We've been happy with the way the house was sited and wouldn't change a thing. I especially like being able to keep windows in the gallery open from June to September and know that the roof overhangs will keep out the rain."

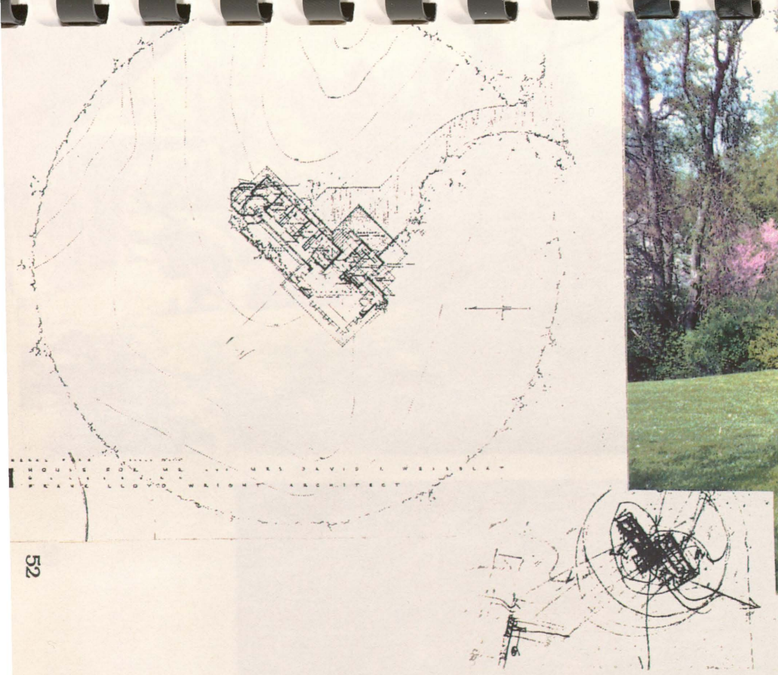




ORIGINAL CLIENT:

MR. and MRS. DAVID WEISBLAT TEXTILE BLOCK RESIDENCE - 1948 - GALESBURG, MI. ("The Acres")





Sincerely yours,
Frank Lloyd Wright

CASE STUDY S-295 Site Evaluation Score: 10.0

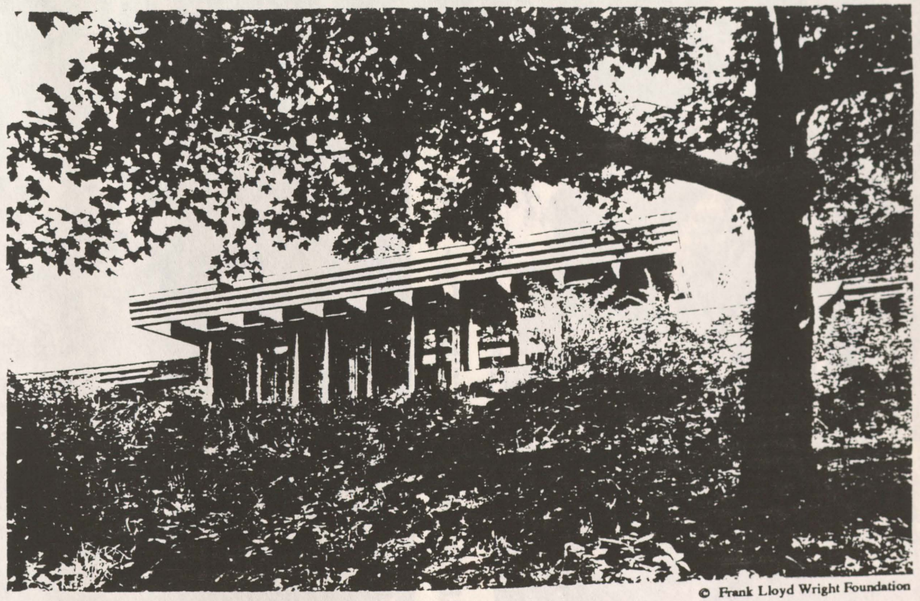
Original Owners: Mr. & Mrs. Eric Pratt
Address: Galesburg, MI ("The Acres")
Type: Usonian Textile Block
Current Owner/Occupant: Mr. & Mrs. Sam B. Lovall

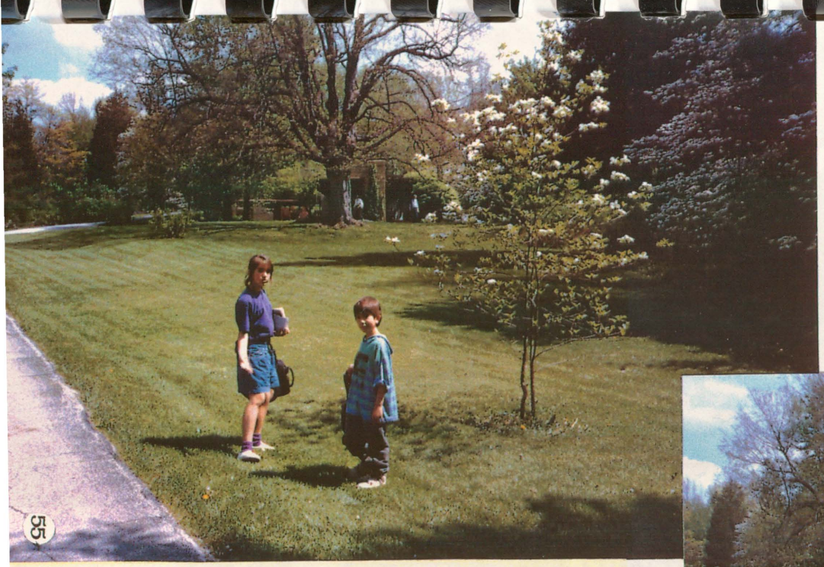
Designed: 1948 Enlarged: _____
Orientation: Southwest

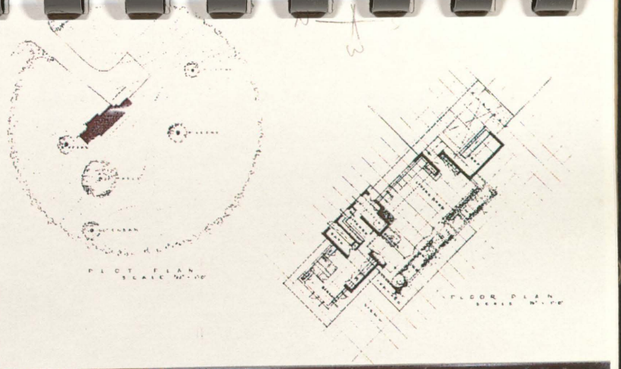
BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: Giant oak tree and natural plantings with sweeping lawn welcomes visitors at gateway to Galesburg Country Homes cooperative neighborhood designed by Wright, now called "The Acres." One-acre, circular lot blends into natural wooded area, with excellent balance of maintained and "wild" areas with mowed grass paths for hiking, natury study, and exercising of children and pets. Family with young children fits perfectly within 43 year old residence, with addition as originally conceived.

Landscape architect owner maintains all native plantings in their natural form; vines and other introduced plant materials used properly and with sensitivity in keeping with Wright's intent. Wood trim of ample sun screen and colorful painted terrace and planter provides life and artistic touch missing from the other textile block homes built following World War II, both here and in Kalamazoo.

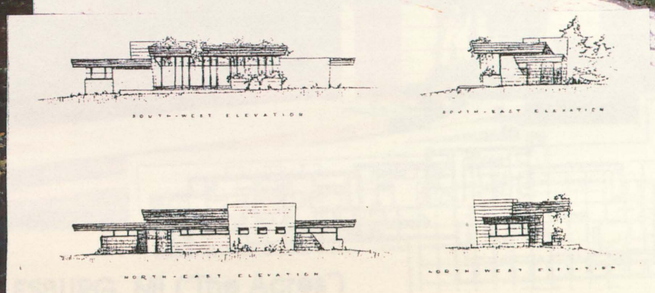
SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: None to be found, unless mowed lawn is somewhat larger than some owners would prefer. Seems proper for young couple with young children.







ERIC PRATT TEXTILE BLOCK RESIDENCE - 1948



CASE STUDY S-297 Site Evaluation Score: 9.8

Original Owners: Lilian & Curtis E. Meyer
Address: Galesburg, MI ("The Acres")
Type: Solar Hemicycle/standard concrete block, 2-story
Current Owner/Occupant: Drs. Adrienne & Robert Lahti

Designed: 1947-49 Occupied: 1950
Orientation: Northeast
Supervision by: John H. Howe

BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: Circular lot works well as transition to native plantings between lots and adjacent forest. Grading, partial berm and naturalistic plantings blend structure into site despite its placement on crest of hill. Two existing trees allowed to grow through roof overhang at each end of house. Large glaciated boulder creates sculptural effect in entry turn-around. True rural atmosphere of five homes within 71-acre protected site, with an 80-foot difference in elevation. This home occupies the highest point developed. Large portion of entire trace is undisturbed.

SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: Solar orientatiaon poor for Michigan. House shifted from South to Northeast, at request of owner concerned about prevailing winds so as to minimize snow in carport. Unnatural shearing of one group of six shrubs against west wall interrupts an otherwise natural appearance. Orchestration of outdoor space most effective with spring flowering trees and tall grass meadow, but harmony would be more complete by extending planting arrangement as shown in original perspective drawing, and adding cascading vines.

FLLW TECHNIQUES USED IN MASTERY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN: Part of an entire cooperative community scheme with greenways, spring-fed lake, community gardens, and orchard provides the ultimate in privacy. Circular turret with study, kitchen, stairwell, and fireplace anchors building firmly to site, while ample balcony brings outdoors in, linking unique atrium over dining space. Small, compact plan appears to have much larger living-dining space flowing into the outdoors. Two-story windows provide sweeping views of undisturbed woods, wildlife, and the changing seasons. Tall trees provide vertical contrast to low, ground-hugging structure that appears as single story from approach. Informal low shrubbery and flowers extend curve of structure.

LANDSCAPE SUGGESTIONS FROM TALIESIN: "The planting should be as shown on sheet one with native flowering shrubs, such as are already present on the property. The circle should contain cedars and junipers of varying heights in groups of three or four, with dogwood in between." (J. H. Howe to Mr. & Mrs. Curtis E. Meyer, 9/20/51)

QUOTES BY ORIGINAL OWNER: "We are overwhelmed with the concept of your proposed development of our land....it is the stuff dreams are made of." (C. E. Meyer to FLLW--4/17/47)

"We approve heartily of the circular plots. While.....we have (not) yet grasped all the subtleties which have been worked into this design, we do appreciate the advantage you have taken of the contours and the interrelationship of the houses with each other, the views, and the immediate natural growth." (C. E. Meyer to FLLW--no date)

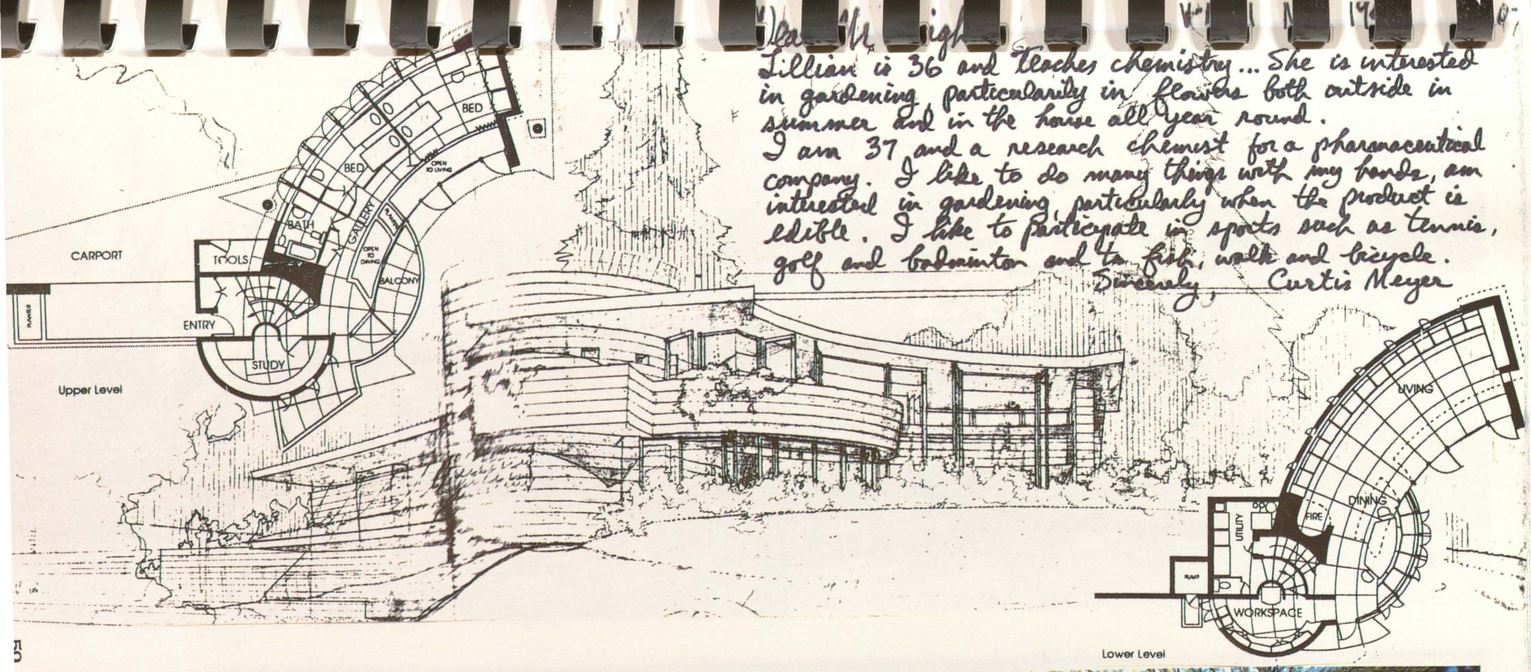
CURTIS MEYER SOLAR HEMICYCLE RESIDENCE - 1948 - GALESBURG, MI ("The Acres")

Dear Mr. Wright,

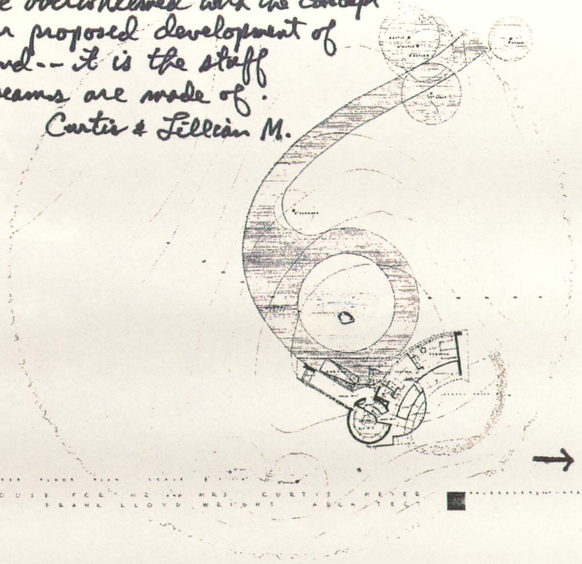
Lillian is 36 and teaches chemistry... She is interested in gardening particularly in flowers both outside in summer and in the house all year round.

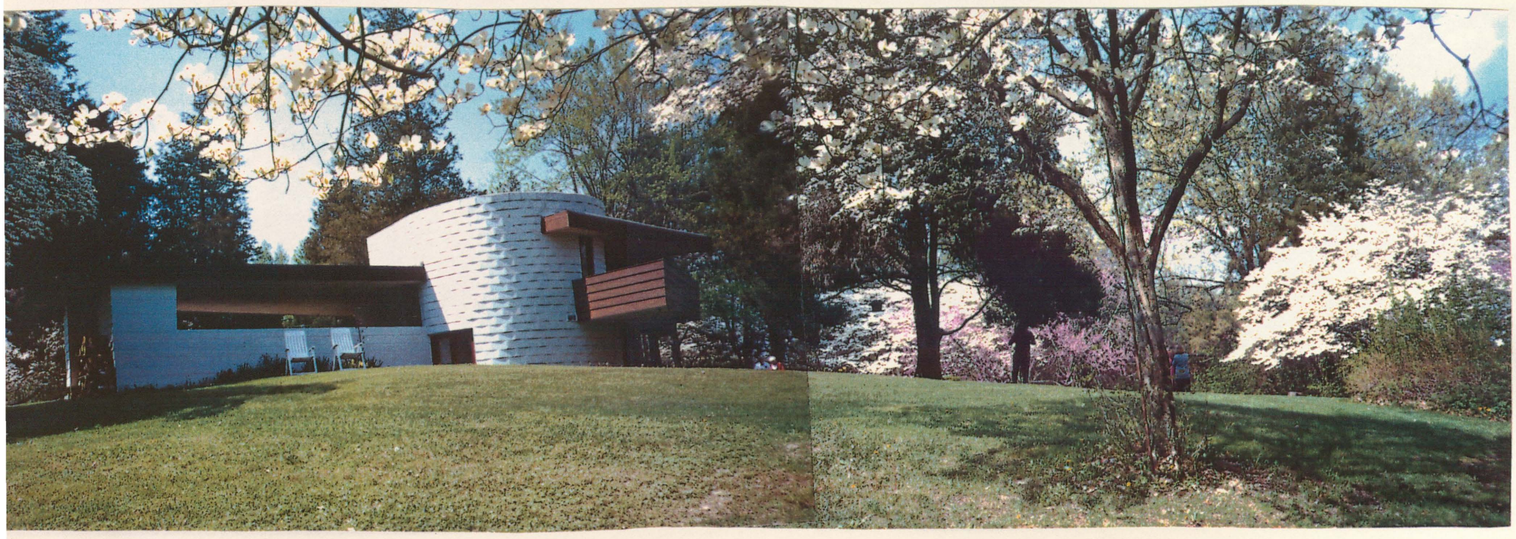
I am 37 and a research chemist for a pharmaceutical company. I like to do many things with my hands, am interested in gardening particularly when the product is edible. I like to participate in sports such as tennis, golf and badminton and to fish, walk and bicycle.

Sincerely, Curtis Meyer



We are overwhelmed with the concept
of your proposed development of
our land -- it is the stuff
that dreams are made of.
Curtis & Lillian M.





CURTIS MEYER SOLAR HEMICYCLE RESIDENCE - 1948 - GALESBURG, MI ("The Acres")

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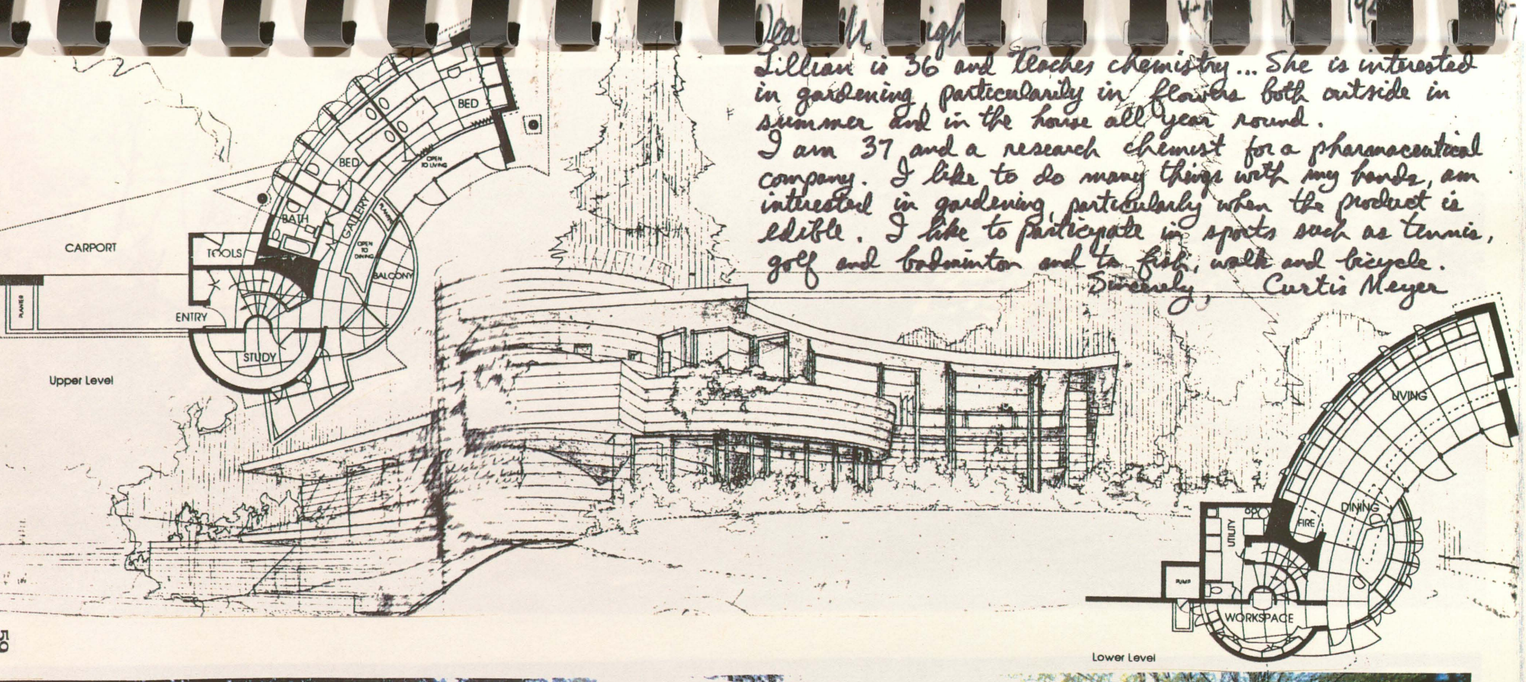

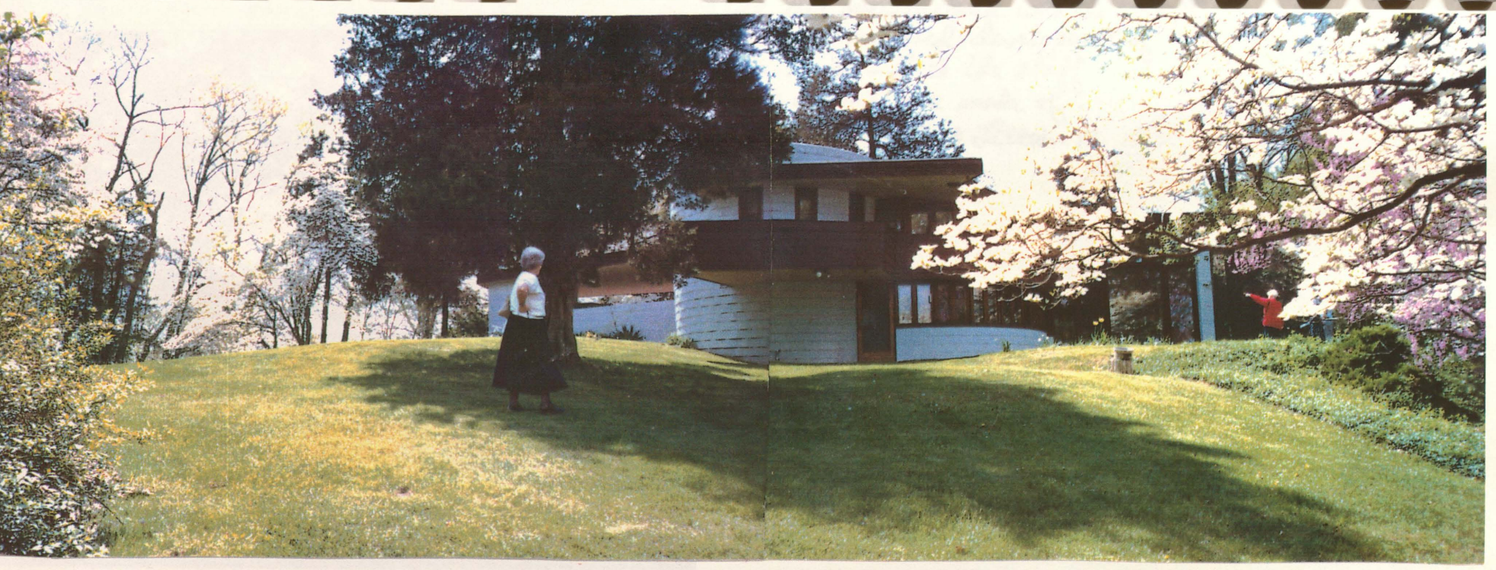

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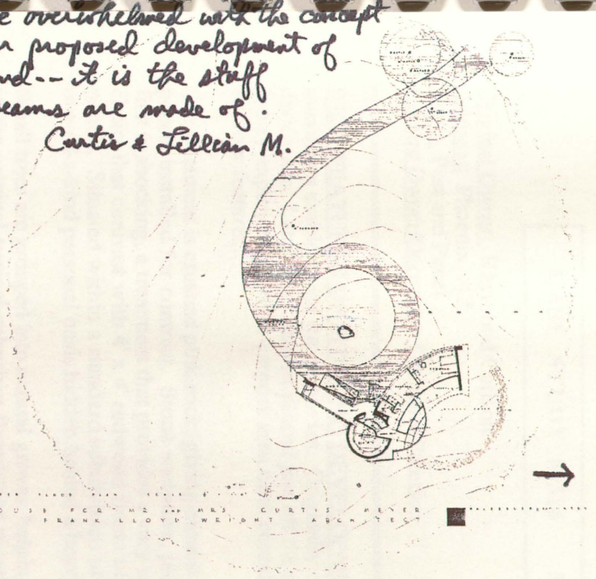
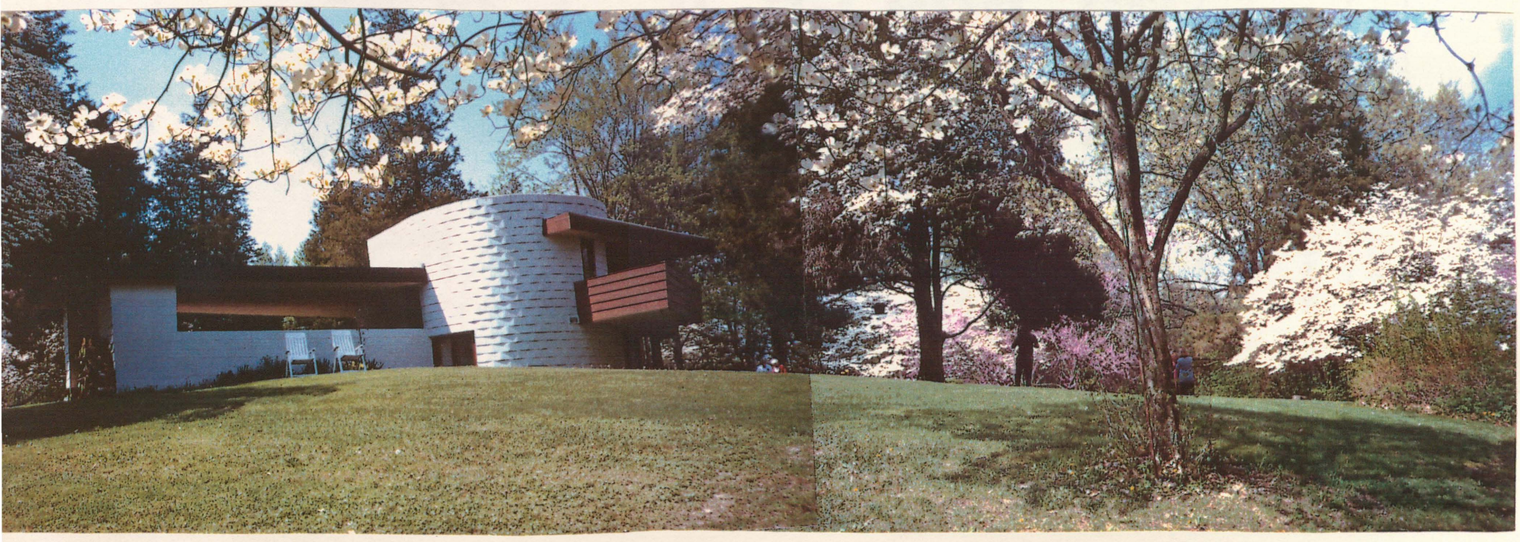


HOUSE FOR MR. AND MRS. CURTIS RIVER
FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT ARCHITECT



CASE STUDY S-326 Site Evaluation Score: 10.0

Original Owner: Raymond Carlson
Address: Phoenix, AZ
Type: Post and Panel
Current Owner/Occupant: Christian Peterson

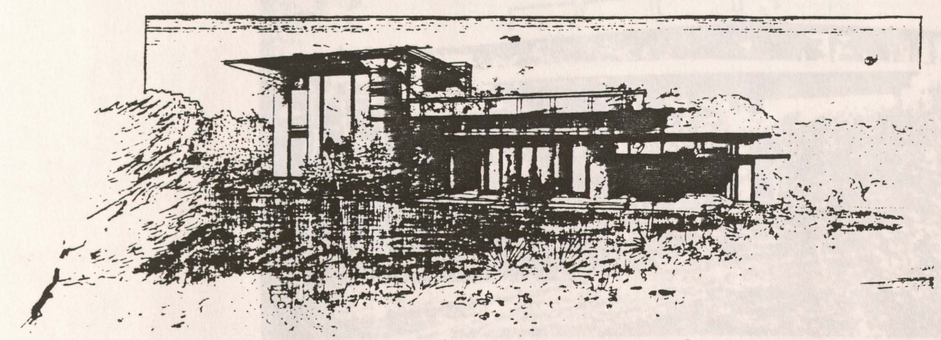
Designed: 1950 Restored: 1980s
Orientation: Northeast

BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: House is set close to south lot line, providing maximum usable space for corner lot. Originally constructed with carport on end, causing driveway to divide site. Later-built carport placed just off the street, with curved walkway that provides preferable "entry experience." Old carport area now contains swimming pool that completes the harmony of outdoor features.

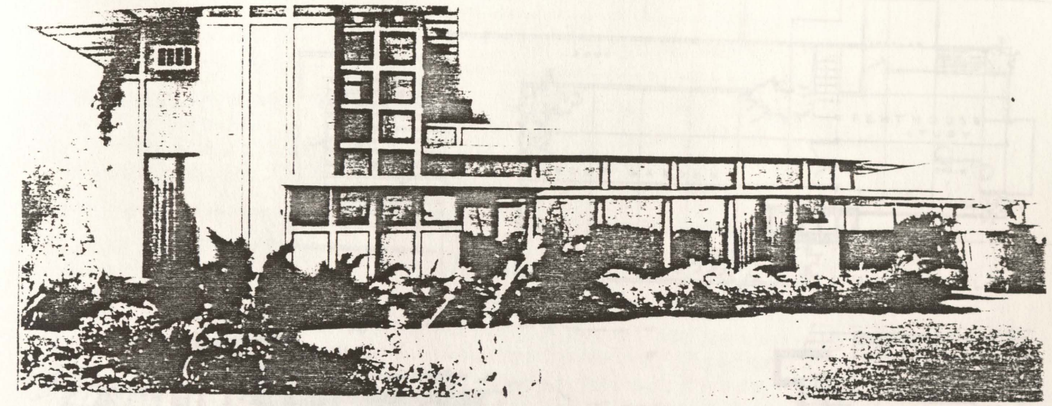
Site treatment is crushed pink rock, giving natural desert appearance, except for limited irrigated grass panels installed for contrast. Stone sculpture, plus "flock" of pink plastic flamingos, create what at first is shocking, a treatment that provides a very unified effect along with a group of pink canvas sling chairs that contrast with 4' x 4' redwood frame of house, painted turquoise with natural grey transite panels. Situated within a standard subdivision of tract houses, this design provides a very welcome, one-of-a-kind personal oasis hidden behind a heavy hedge.

Small trees are grouped into natural groves, helping to create an artistic effect overall, in direct contrast to the original typical suburban foundation plantings and unrelated shrubbery, as shown in historic photographs of the house. Split levels, rooftop sun deck, and many other surprises make this small house a special experience, where Wright and the unknown landscape designer of recent years both performed their magic.

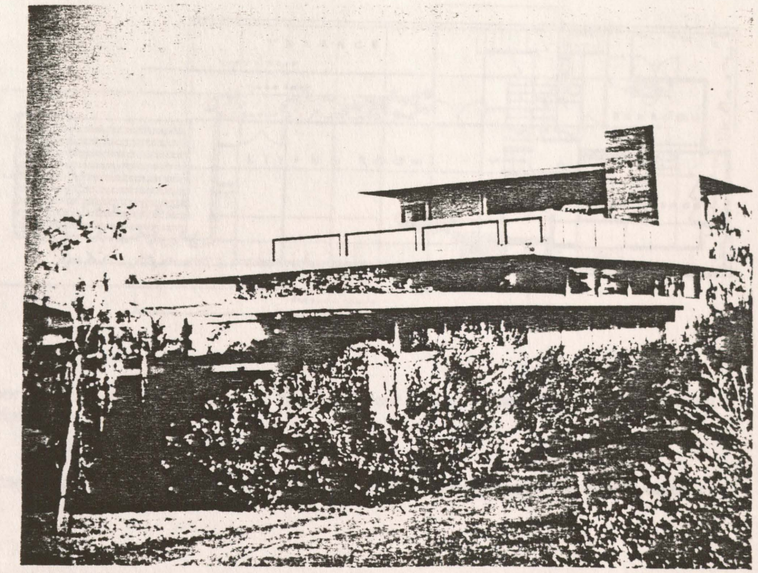
SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: The open carport at curbside presents a negative first appearance, but the property is still rated a "10.0," since this is a great improvement over the attached carport, as originally constructed.

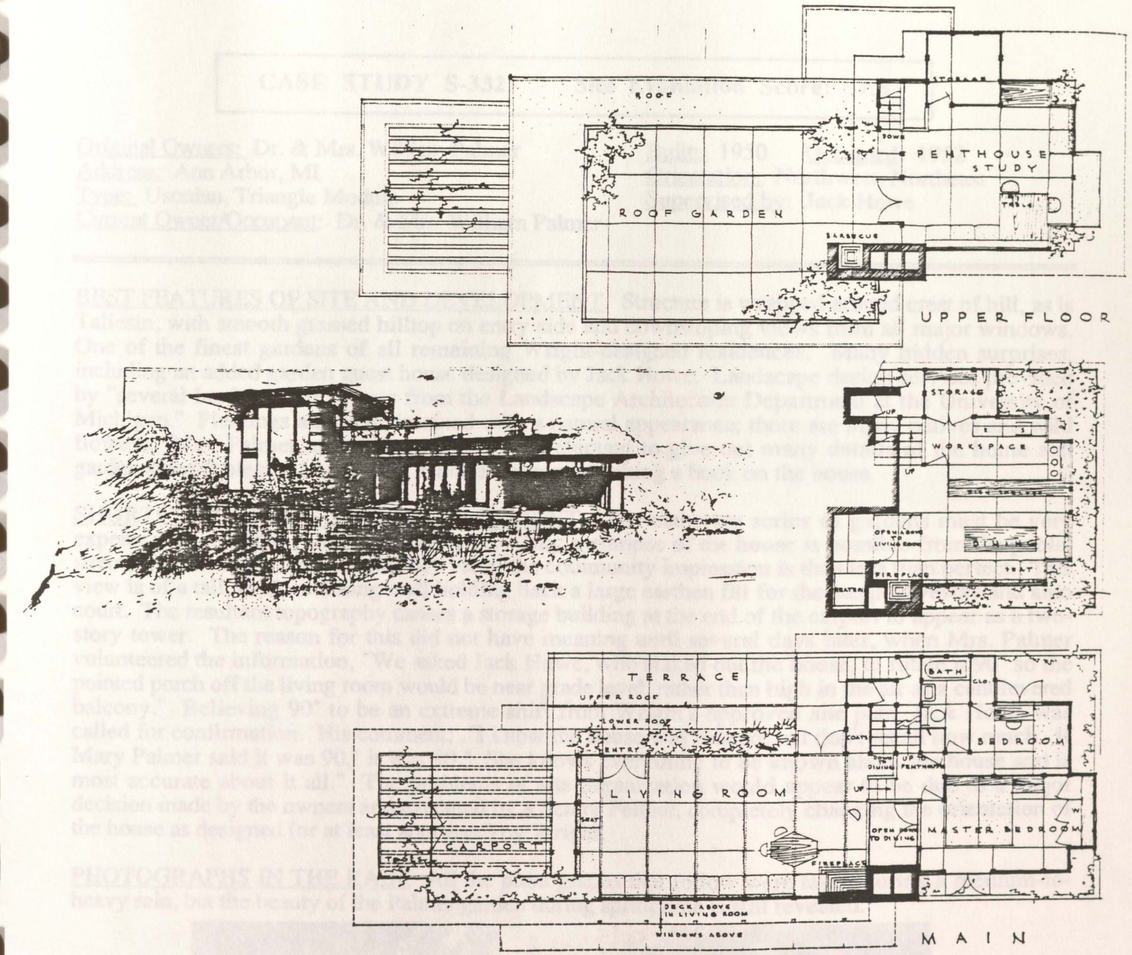


DWELLING FOR MR. AND MRS. RAYMOND CARLSON
PHOENIX, ARIZONA
FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT ARCHITECT



Raymond Carlson low-cost house ($16,000 in 1951), with original traditional foundation planting which attempted to match "landscaping" of typical tract house development than suburbanizing Phoenix, Arizona. Carport (above) on right has been removed and replaced with patio and swimming pool. Streetside view of carport (below) prior to growth of thick privacy hedge and new carport, constructed at curbside.





Upper floor, lower level, and main floor plans of compact, innovative, space-efficient design. Glassed-in shower has been added to lower level corner, beyond workspace.

Artistic effect of contemporary landscape design has been captured on videotape. (Still photographs have been taken to occupy this space.)

CASE STUDY S-332 Site Evaluation Score: 9.8

Original Owners: Dr. & Mrs. William Palmer
Address: Ann Arbor, MI
Type: Usonian, Triangle Module
Current Owner/Occupant: Dr. & Mrs. William Palmer

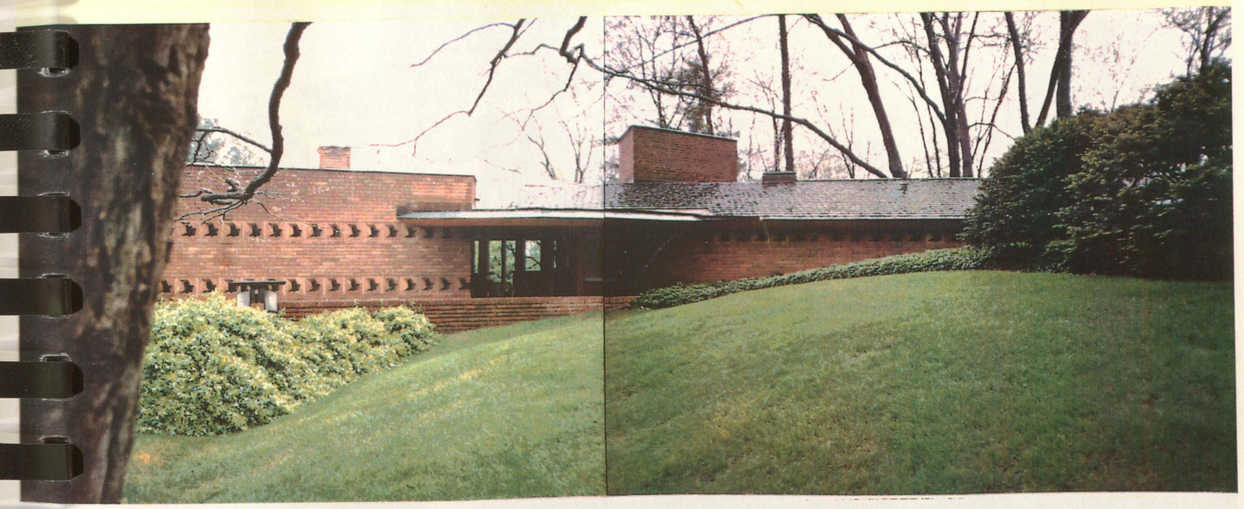
Built:: 1950 Occupied: 1952
Orientation: Northwest, Northeast
Supervised by: Jack Howe

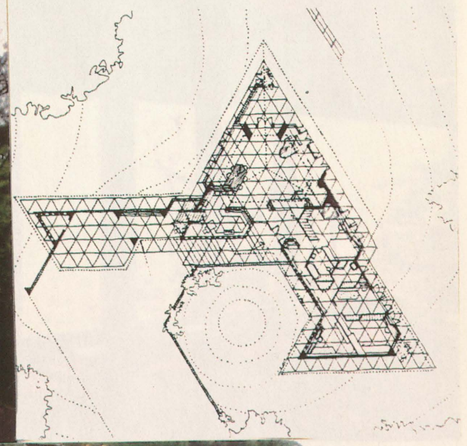
BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: Structure is wrapped around crest of hill, as is Taliesin, with smooth grassed hilltop on entry side and downsloping views from all major windows. One of the finest gardens of all remaining Wright-designed residences. Many hidden surprises, including an added garden guest house designed by Jack Howe. Landscape design services provided by "several landscape architects from the Landscape Architecture Department at the University of Michigan." Plantings all are maintained with a natural appearance; there are many natives and wild flowers. Mrs. Palmer, an avid gardener, was reluctant to give out many details of the home and garden since Professor Leonard K. Eaton is currently writing a book on the house.

SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: The elaborate series of gardens must be very expensive to maintain, and labor intensive. Only a glimpse of the house is possible from the public street, and this is the least satisfactory view; the community impression is thus less than perfect. This view is of a tall, brick retaining wall holding back a large earthen fill for the steep driveway and auto court. The resultant topography causes a storage building at the end of the carport to appear as a two-story tower. The reason for this did not have meaning until several days later, when Mrs. Palmer volunteered the information, "We asked Jack Howe, who staked out the house, to rotate it 90° so the pointed porch off the living room would be near grade level, rather than high in the air as a cantilevered balcony." Believing 90° to be an extreme shift from Wright's approved site plan, Jack Howe was called for confirmation. His comment: "I know the house was rotated, but don't recall how much. If Mary Palmer said it was 90,° it was 90.° She knows everything to be known about the house and is most accurate about it all." The problems of site organization would appear to be due to a major decision made by the owners and executed by a Senior Fellow, completely changing the orientation of the house as designed (or at least approved) by Wright. .

PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE RAIN: All the photographs that follow were taken during a medium-to-heavy rain, but the beauty of the Palmer garden during springtime is still revealed.

ORIGINAL CLIENT:
DR. and MRS. WILLIAM PALMER USONIAN RESIDENCE - 1952 - ANN ARBOR, MI

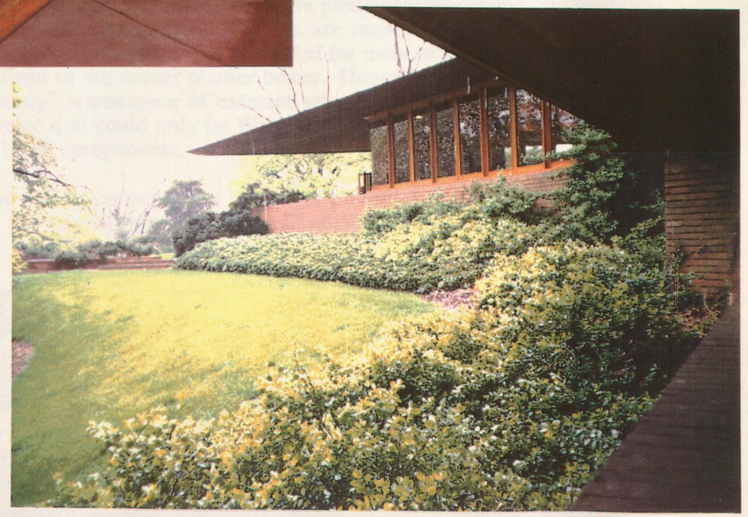




FRANK
LLOYD
WRIGHT

We asked Jack Howe to shift house on the site 90° so pointed porch would be at grade level rather than high in the air as a balcony"

Mrs William Palmer 5.5.91



Gr: 5/5/91

CASE STUDY S-388 Site Evaluation Score: 6.6

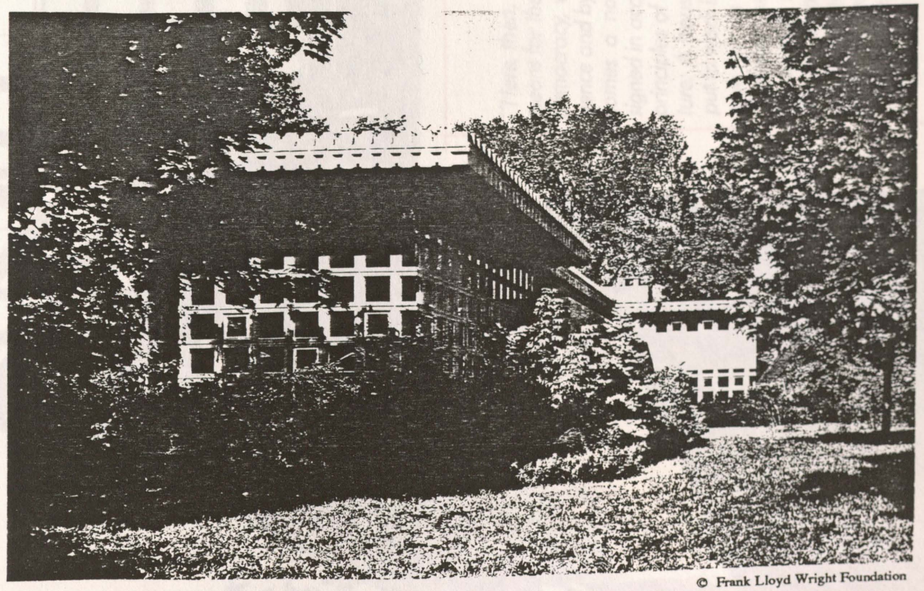
Original Owner: Dr. Dorothy H. Turkel
Address: Detroit, MI
Type: Usonian Automatic
Current Owner/Occupant: Ivan Doverspike

Designed/Built: 1955
Orientation: East, with considerable southern exposure

BEST FEATURES OF SITE AND DEVELOPMENT: Placement of house against driveway at west lot line provides unusually large lawn and outdoor living space to the east and south. An amazing amount of privacy on a very busy Detroit street is the result. Adjoining city lots have only a few feet of unusable side yard space. Low wall on side and rear lot lines also constructed of blocks, matching house.

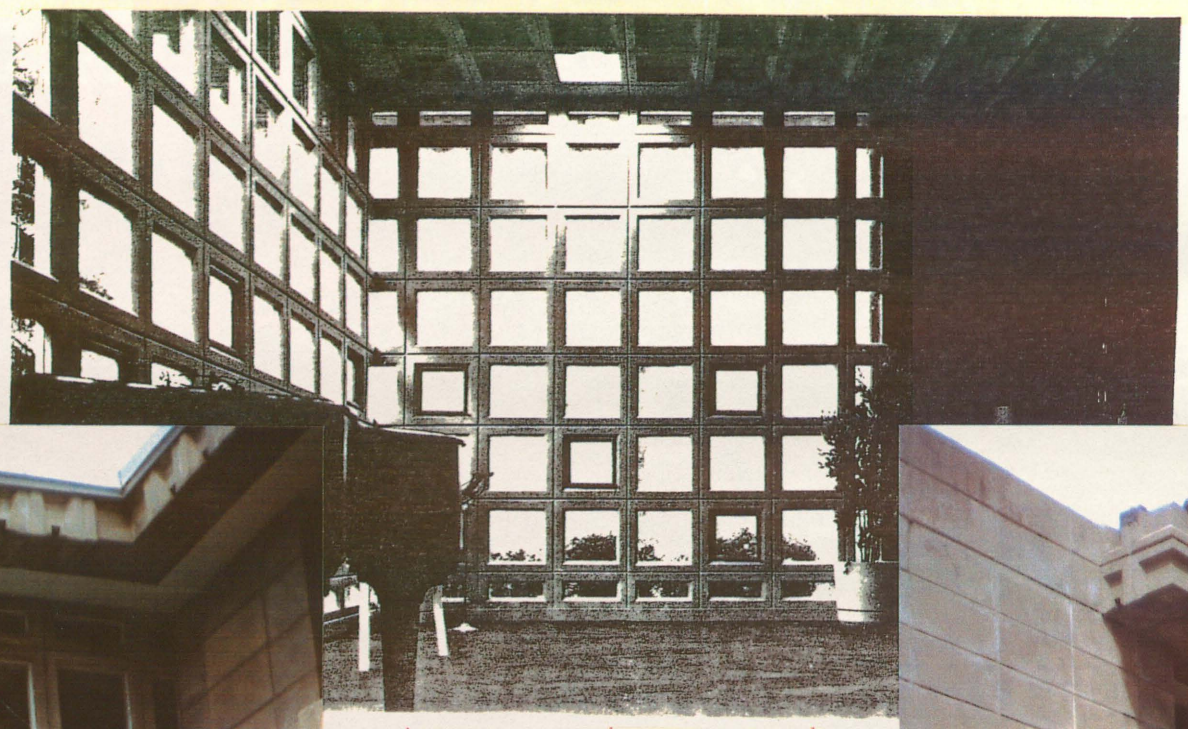
SHORTCOMINGS OF SITE DEVELOPMENT: Trees on site are predominately young and medium-size, but mature trees in neighborhood suggest those on site are recent replacements. Asphalt driveway against west side of house is unfortunate, but it is shaded for most of the day. Plantings are sheared or unkempt inside and in front of the corner planter boxes. House had been vacant for some time, which accounted for the "seedy" appearance of exterior when evaluated. House appears in excellent condition, with an ambiance that could only be Wrightian, with form, texture, and lighting provided by simple basic concrete block components.

Property development currently is nothing special, but has great potential to become a Wrightian showplace. This property "begs" for a landscape plan that will add to the assets of this innovative architecture.



DR. DOROTHY TURKEL USONIAN AUTOMATIC RESIDENCE - 1955 - DETROIT, MI

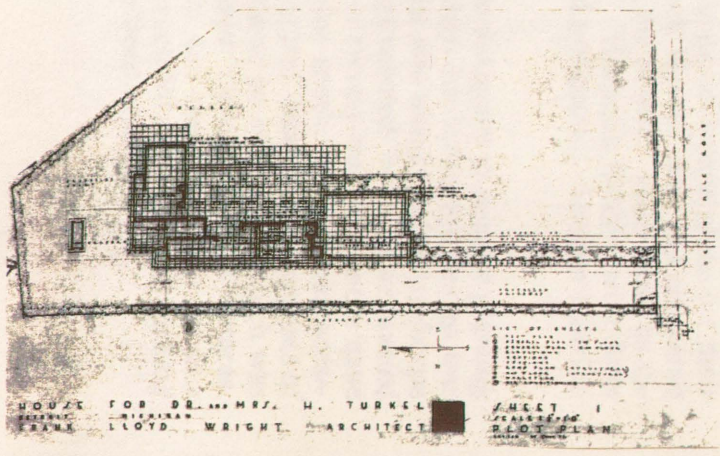
FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT



"Here, then, within moderate means for the free man of our democracy, with some intelligence and by his own energy, comes a natural house designed in accordance with the principles of organic architecture. A house which may be put to work in our society and give us an architecture for "housing" which is becoming to a free society because, though standardized fully, it yet establishes the democratic ideal of variety–the sovereignty of the individual."

Frank Lloyd Wright

The Usonian Automatic system was developed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1950 as a response to the desire for custom built moderate cost housing. The word "Usonian" refers to the United States of America and the word "Automatic" to a system in which simple basic components could be assembled by virtually anyone into an infinite number of individual forms.



Survey of First Families Not Visited

Special insight into the Wright-client design process can best be provided by First Families. Ten First Families were interviewed in their Wright-designed homes, and two who now live elsewhere were interviewed between sessions of the FLLW Building Conservancy Conferences at Taliesin West (1990) and Grand Rapids, Michigan (1991). Inasmuch as it was not possible during this phase of the project to personally visit and interview more than twelve of the approximate fifty surviving First Families, it was determined that a questionnaire should be developed and mailed to those not personally visited. The questionnaire (Appendix C) was mailed to the forty-four First Families whose addresses could be obtained. All live in residences built between 1940 and 1958. Nearly one-half (21) responded to the questionnaire, several after a second mailing; two were returned, due to insufficient address; and one is no longer at the original address. Their locations span fourteen states. Styles represented include Usonian, Usonian Automatic (textile block), and Solar Hemicycle. Overall, the results of this exercise are in line with those evaluations for the twelve First Families who were interviewed in person, but there is no substitute for the additional knowledge that can be gained through personal contact, photography, and videotaping.

The sites for these residences range in size from one-half acre to seventeen acres, although one five-acre homesite is located in the center of a 3,000-acre farmstead. The estimated lawn area ranged from 0-to-80-percent. Space impacted through the introduction of plant material, the residence, driveway, and parking occupied 8-to-40-percent of the site. The portion of the sites left natural accounted for 0-to-90-percent.

Frank Lloyd Wright, himself, visited only one-third of the residences; his son, Lloyd, visited two of the houses, and Mrs. Wright toured another. All First Families made at least two trips to Taliesin and/or Taliesin West to personally confer with Wright and the apprentice assigned to their project. Most had one or two apprentices stake out the building and make site inspections at critical times. No apprentice moved to the community to serve as "clerk-of-the-works," such as had been the case in earlier days for the larger residences of Wright's design. One First Family depended entirely on instructions and advice via telephone and mail, with no apprentice on site until after the house was completed and occupied. Many personally aided in various stages of construction or built furniture, based on Wright's designs, and did most of the original planting--usually without specific landscape drawings or plant identification.

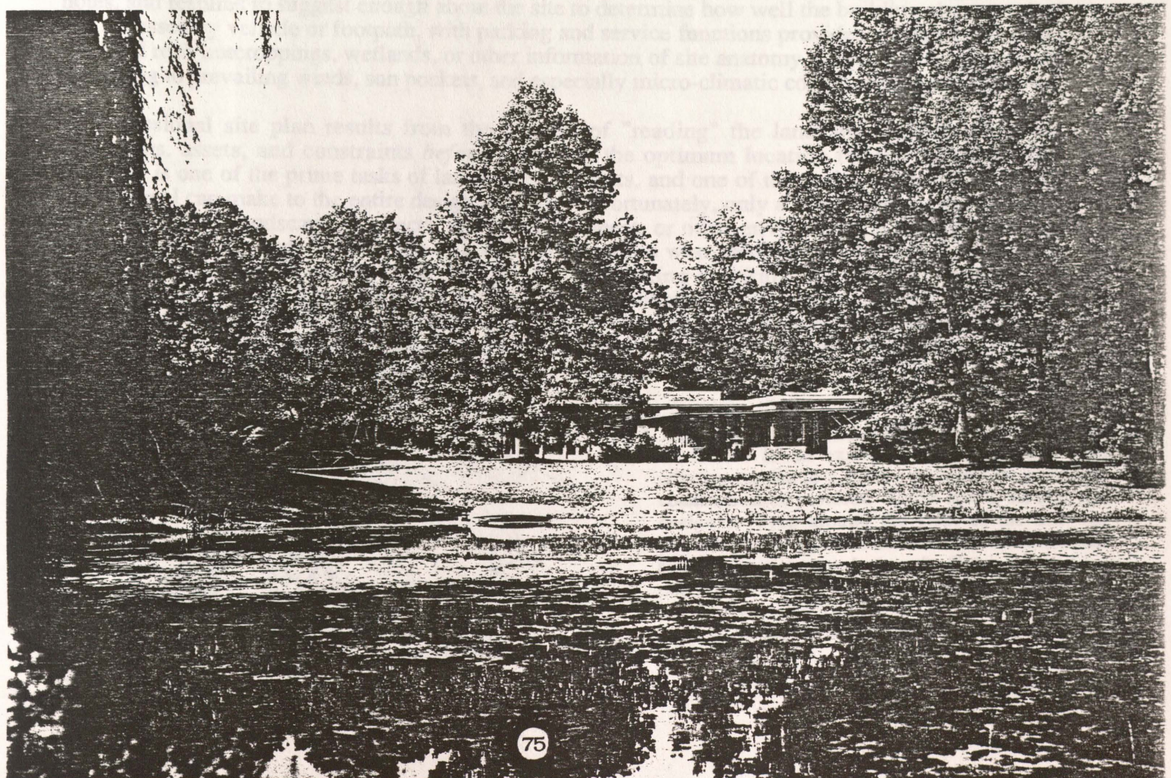
As to the question of who from Wright's Studio actually drew the site or landscape plans for their residence, twelve listed Frank Lloyd Wright, two answered "with Jack Howe," and one answered "with Ling Po." Jack Howe was listed again as the site designer "with the owner." Also listed as the landscape designer were "Cornelia Brierly with John Otterheimer," "Cornelia Brierly with John deKoven Hill," and "Cornelia Brierly," alone. Only one responded "did not know." Another failed to answer this question.

Nine First Families hired independent landscape architects or landscape designers to prepare planting plans--most, immediately or within a year or so after occupancy, although one landscape design was prepared just recently after thirty-one years of occupancy. Lloyd Wright was referenced as landscape architect for his youngest brother Robert Llewellyn; the plan was not implemented "because we wanted to keep the natural setting," according to Mrs. R. L. Wright. Twelve of twenty-one residences have some southern exposure, with five having most window areas facing due south. Seven residences--including those in northern climates and the two so-called "Solar Hemicycles," have major expanses of glass that face toward the north, northeast, or northwest--providing little or no solar gain, which was the basic premise for their design. Thirteen of the residences have major views of natural features, such as water bodies, woods, and/or mountains; only two face "lawn and trees," and one faces a Japanese garden. Of the fourteen that originally had gravel or crushed rock for driveway and parking court surfaces, six have been paved with asphalt or concrete and one has been bricked.

These First Families were somewhat reluctant to self-evaluate their own property, one stating that this only could be done by an impartial evaluator, with the invitation for the surveyor to come do this, as he had for the seventy-three personally visited sites. Three ranked all questionnaire items either "9" or "10." Items rating "8" or below the greatest number of times were Energy Conservation, Outdoor Construction, and Utilitarian Functions (i.e. drainage). Several comments dealt with the cost of outdoor maintenance, grading, or drainage problems. While user satisfaction is high for House Orientation, it is lowest on Energy Conservation--raising doubts if owners fully realize the interrelationship of these two items.

There also seemed to be conflicting answers dealing with solar gain and protection against sun penetration. All of the thirty-two First Families felt that sun penetration in the winter is good. All but one felt that roof overhang is adequate to shelter from excessive summer sun penetration. Sixteen depend upon shade trees, and fifteen need window coverings to reduce excessive sun penetration and glare; only two have a trellis or vines installed for this purpose. Eight need to use blinds or draperies by afternoon, with the time-spans falling within a range from 1:00 PM to 7:00 PM. All felt that the amount of window treatment is "just right," though one owner with north-and-west windows felt that window treatment "could be better on the south side."

With regard to changes made over time, eight had removed or drastically thinned out trees they felt shaded the property to excess. One admitted that the shrubs had been overplanted, but that was thirty-three years ago. Three had planted additional trees and shrubs for privacy. Two had replaced dead trees, one stating that these also were dying and were "still the wrong species." One gravel auto courtyard had been partially planted in flowers and shrubs. Two First Families had installed Japanese gardens, one with a carp pond.



Critique of One-Hundred Site Plans

The one-hundred site plans last signed by Wright were selected for study. The dates for these design plans ranged from 1950 to 1959, representing the final decade of Wright's life. Both built and unbuilt projects were investigated if the site plan, or partial site plan, had adequate information.

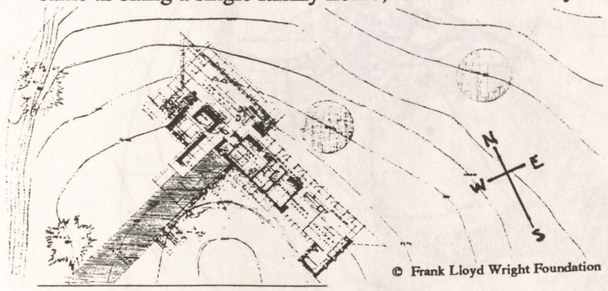
As an octogenarian, Wright was unable to give more than cursory attention to the large number of residential commissions, as he traveled between the two Taliesins and his redesigned suite in the Park Plaza (New York City), nicknamed Taliesin East. A great deal of his energy went into the completion of the Guggenheim Museum, but other unusual and complicated designs required his attention: a new Arizona State Capitol, new public buildings for Baghdad, and his "mile high Illinois Building" for the Chicago lakefront; none but the Guggenheim actually were built. The Marin County (CA) government complex, like the Guggenheim, was started after many delays, but Wright did not live to see the completion of this magnificent edifice.

As his biographer, Harvey Einbinder, stated:

> *"During the last decade of Wright's life, assistants and apprentices translated his ideas into finished drawings and blueprints and freed him from the tedious details connected with actual construction. Since his hand could no longer execute his architectural conceptions, he relied on assistants to prepare the drawings that appear under his name."* [10]

Most, but not all, site plans found in the FLLW Archives or in published form--such as the Monograph series by A.D.A. EDITA, Tokyo, Japan, (© Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation)--contained a scale, north point, contour lines portraying topography, existing trees, and many other symbols, notes, and features to suggest enough about the site to determine how well the building plan was sited and accessed by vehicle or footpath, with parking and service functions provided. While some plans included rock outcroppings, wetlands, or other information of site anatomy, other critical information pertaining to prevailing winds, sun pockets, and especially micro-climatic conditions remain unknown.

A professional site plan results from the process of "reading" the land and understanding the conditions, assets, and constraints *before* selecting the optimum location for the building. Site planning is one of the prime tasks of landscape architects, and one of the major contributions that a professional can make to the entire design process. Unfortunately, only a minor percent of structures ever are sited by landscape architects, architects, planners, or other environmental designers. Most such decisions are made by builders or bulldozer operators who "pre-design" the site by knocking down trees, leveling the terrain, removing top soil, and placing or "siting" the building according to predetermined setback lines, side yards, and rear yards established as minimum standards by a zoning ordinance and/or land subdivision regulations. Public buildings, business operations, industrial parks, and multi-family housing call for a procedure more complex, but the design process essentially is the same as siting a single family home, to which this study has been limited.



© Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

The Seamour Shavin Residence in Chattanooga, Tennessee is an example of a major site plan adjustment, due to a survey error and long-distance communication problem. Before seeing the site, this design to wrap around the crest of the hill was prepared, to be abandoned when it was learned that two lots were surveyed when the Shavins owned but one. To fit their lot, the house was completely redesigned and placed *on*, not *of*, this high point of land on the Civil War's historic Missionary Ridge.

10 Harvey Einbinder, An American Genius: Frank Lloyd Wright. Philosophical Library, Inc., New York, 1986.

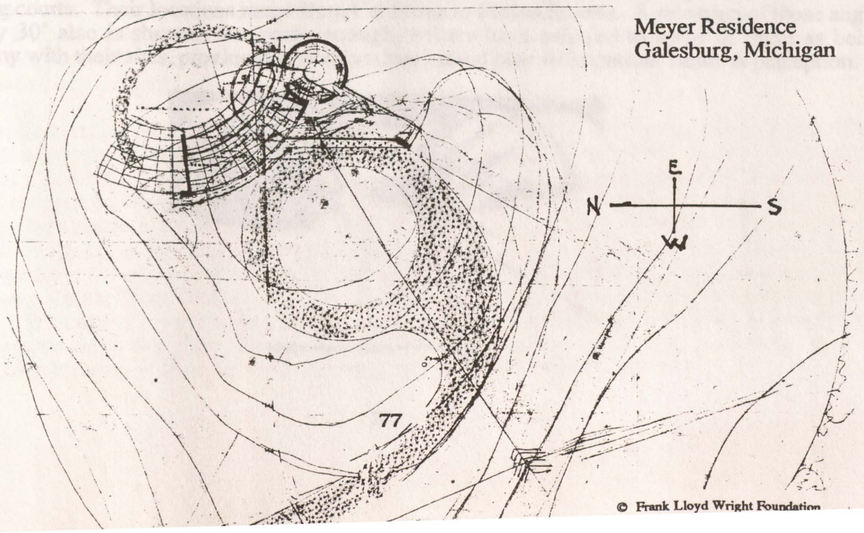
Orientation

Proper orientation can do as much or more than building design to reduce energy consumption substantially. The most favorable orientation for a residence situated on all researched sites is for the long axis or principal facade (living room windows) to face south or southeast. This permits penetration of the low, welcome winter sun to flood the interior, while blocking penetration of the hot summer rays--in a higher position at midday--through the use of roof overhangs, deciduous trees, arbors, or other shading devices. Large areas of glass should not face the west, if the object is to prevent penetration of hot summer rays when the sun is low in the sky. Western exposure is more unmanageable, and the only reasonable way to avoid excessive sun penetration and glare late in the day is to use window blinds or draw drapes. In cold climates, in order to minimize heat loss and cold penetration, north-facing window openings should be limited. Maximum protection is intensified through the use of earth berms, or north facing walls may be sunk into the ground for insulation. Other factors that influence building location are landforms, existing and proposed site vegetation, nearby water bodies, prevailing winds, and views. Local atmospheric conditions also affect orientation; for example, prevalent morning mists make southwesterly exposures the sunniest and most comfortable in parts of New York State.

Most Wright-designed residences are located in the central United States between the 35° and 45° latitude belt, where almost equal consideration must be given to protection from winter cold as from summer heat. Above 45° latitude, prime orientation objectives are protection from cold winter winds and utilization of the warming rays of the sun. Below 35° latitude, the principal orientation considerations are protection from the intense heat of the sun and capturing summer breezes.

The Jacobs II hemicycle house is a classic example of Wright's optimum use of organic architecture--with the house turned away from the cold Wisconsin winds and earth sheltered (bermed) to the north to reduce loss of heat, while the entire south wall and sunken garden were opened to the warming rays of the sun. Unfortunately, these principles of orientation were not always followed in siting other Wright solar hemicycle-type houses, or other building types. Apparently, many variations in orientation were influenced by views toward a lake, river, or other aesthetic features. The goal of achieving harmony with the topography in many cases also apparently influenced siting decisions that provided less-than-optimum solar orientation. In the one-hundred site plans analyzed, 41% of the houses were oriented south or southeast, 20% southwest, with 7% oriented due west and 6% due east. There was one example each of equal glass exposure on the south and north, on the east and west, and even 360° completely around the structure. The discovery that as many as 26% of the houses were oriented north, northwest, or northeast was very surprising, since many of these are located in northern Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan.

Meyer Residence
Galesburg, Michigan



The 30/60° Angle

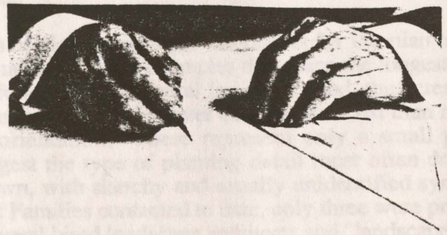
When possible, landscape architects site structures so that their major axis runs *with* contour lines, sometimes said to be "with the grain." This means that one end of the structure will not be excessively higher or lower than the other, as is frequently seen in typical builders' subdivisions when a series of steep steps are needed to reach the front door, and a mass of evergreen shrubs becomes the typical solution to conceal an unsightly, exposed foundation that is oversized at one end; this is anything *but* an organic solution for siting a structure. The rationale for orienting a structure to *fight* rather than *fit* with the contour pattern might be: existing large trees, rock outcroppings, or wetlands; adjoining views, good or bad.

In the beginning, the researcher's expectations were that Wright's design strategy for organic architecture would be for residences to have the largest glass expanse areas facing south or southeast--actually 10° to 20° east of south, which is the ideal orientation for most of the areas under study; a few degrees west of south would be more effective if solar storage had been designed into the structure, such as masses of stone, tile, or water.

In his book, *The Natural House*, Wright wrote that he preferred a 30° orientation. Years ago while visiting Taliesin, an apprentice was heard to say, "Mr. Wright could design anything with a T-square and a 30/60° triangle and a handful of colored pencils, but the 30/60° triangle is his favorite drawing instrument." This statement was recalled while critiquing these one-hundred site plans, and the results of the analysis provides a revealing pattern that clearly supports the comment of Wright's former apprentice. Wright-designed houses apparently actually were most frequently sited because of his fondness for the 30° angle, or because of his habit of reaching for his 30/60° triangle:

Angle of House Placement	Percent
Main axis angled 30° off the drawing sheet and/or north point	51%
House set parallel to street / lot lines / drawing sheet	24%
Portion of house at 30° angle	8%
House angled other than 90,° 45,° or 30°	6%
Semi-circular, hemicycle, or lozenge-shaped residence	6%
All or portion of house at 45° angle	5%

It hardly can be coincidental when all or a portion of 59 of the 100 houses analyzed have at least a portion or wing angled at exactly 30.° Of these, only two also were parallel to the contours. The foldout on page 80 illustrates a small sampling of Wright houses that were sited to go against the grain of the natural topography, requiring excessive masonry retaining bases and high walls for terraces and parking courts. Their locations range from California to Massachusetts. A selection of those angled at exactly 30° also is shown. Strangely enough, writers have referred to some of these as being in harmony with their sites, proving that *illusion* does indeed play an important factor in perception.



Alfred Eisenstaedt. Copyright 1956 Time Inc.

Site Engineering

Topography. Seventy-six percent of the site plans located were prepared on topographic maps, with the contour intervals ranging from one to ten feet. The largest number (28%) were drawn on maps with two-foot contours, an interval necessary to understand the flow of the land of moderate slope. When topography was not shown by contours, the slope still could be evaluated when sections or elevation-sections were drawn in adequate detail.

In his earliest work, Wright was building on urban or suburban lots that were predominantly level. During the period of this particular survey (1950-1959), he had written into his standard contract, "Dwelling houses upon urban lots will not be accepted; acreage is indispensable." Larger lots outside city limits usually had the variety of topography he preferred, with the site plans studied identified as follows:

Grade (Footage rise/fall per 100 feet)	Totals
Slope under 10% (flat / rolling)	31%
Slope of 10% - 20% (moderately steep)	38%
Slope greater than 20% (rugged / very steep)	25%

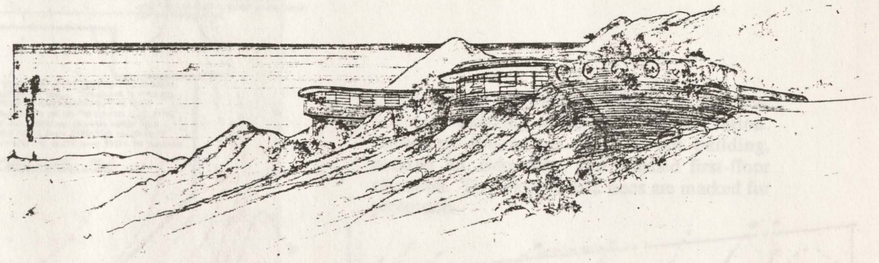
Establishing Grades. Establishing the grade of floors, terraces, parking courts, and other features near a house are important reasons to understand and make use of site engineering--for the grading of final slopes, in particular. The first floor or living level is of major importance, due to the time to be spent there, the number of steps required for access, and the amount of alteration in the natural landform to be performed through grading, cut-and-fill, and the handling of surface water.

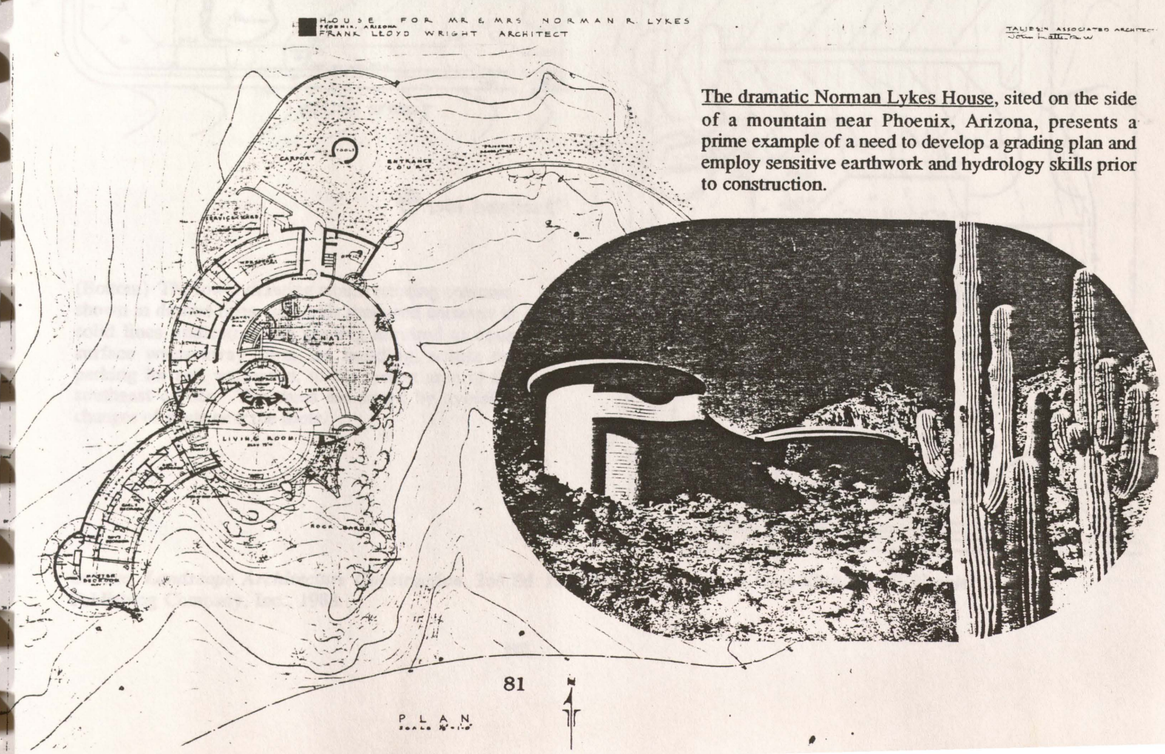
The use of a masonry retaining base was a method generally used by Wright on many Usonian-type houses to "level out" the normal single story structures--irregardless of how much the site dropped away at various corners of the house, usually steepest at the location of the outdoor terrace. As shown on the foldout on page 80, the main entry was generally at ground level, with a rise of a few steps, at the most, to ground floor level. Retaining walls, averaging ten feet in height, with some as high as thirty feet, were filled with rock and soil to the ground floor level. This was a simple, if expensive, method to avoid changing the slope around a major portion of the house. It was determined that in 51% of the cases, these retaining walls were less than five feet in height, but 25% were from five-to-ten feet, 23% were from ten-to-fifteen feet, and 8% from fifteen-to-thirty-five feet in height. Such proposals were reason enough to make some houses too expensive to build, and these plans joined the file of unbuilt projects. Residences often described as having a "bow like a ship" or "appearing to grow out of the hillside" are among some of Wright's best known and comfortable residences--represented by those designed for Carlton Wall, Lowell Walter, Arnold Friedman, Douglas Grant, Della Walker, Robert Berger, William Palmer, Russell Kraus, R. W. Lindholm, Willard Keland, Louis Fredrick, and Norman Lykes. They are beautiful places, but beauty came with a price tag--both economic and ecological.

The random selections of plans, drawings, and photos for Usonian houses included on the following foldout were chosen mainly to show examples that place the longest portion of the house against the contours, rather than following the natural lay of the land, thus creating the need for high retaining walls, excessive amounts of fill, and greater construction cost than necessary, even though failing to obtain the optimum orientation. These represent only a small percent of those evaluated and interpretated, but suggest the type of planting detail most often drawn on site plans of the 1950s. Existing trees are shown, with sketchy and usually unidentified symbols suggesting masses of new plantings. Of the First Families contacted to date, only three were provided with a planting plan from the FLLW Studio. Several hired landscape architects and "landscapers" to prepare planting plans, but the majority made the plant selections themselves. No amount of planting, however, can correct a poorly sited house, as Mrs. Abbey Roberts learned in the 1930s (see page 96).

Grading Plans. Through a cursory examination of two-hundred or so site plans and the detailed analysis of the one-hundred plans included in this study, a grading plan for one of Wright's designs has yet to be located. The term is not included in the filing system at the FLLW Archives. No site plan yet located shows future contours, even as needed for road construction.

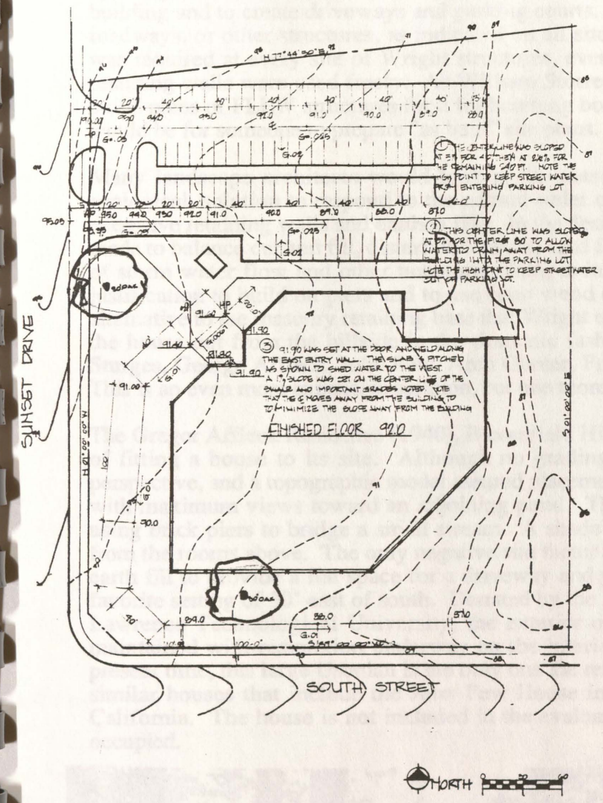
Topographic or contour maps represent only the existing form of a site, including level areas, where contours are farthest apart, and steepest locations, where contour are closer together. Grading plans specify the proposed shape of the grounds required to install a driveway and parking and to slope surfaces in order to drain water away from structures--expecially doorways and steps, or slopes to lower entrances. Grading cannot take place where existing trees and other vegetation are to be retained, but the drawing of new contour lines is essential to avoid retaining walls whenever possible, to handle storm drainage, the general flow of water, and to control the function and final appearance of landform as a whole Examples of a site before and after grading, where new contours appear as solid lines, are shown on the following page.



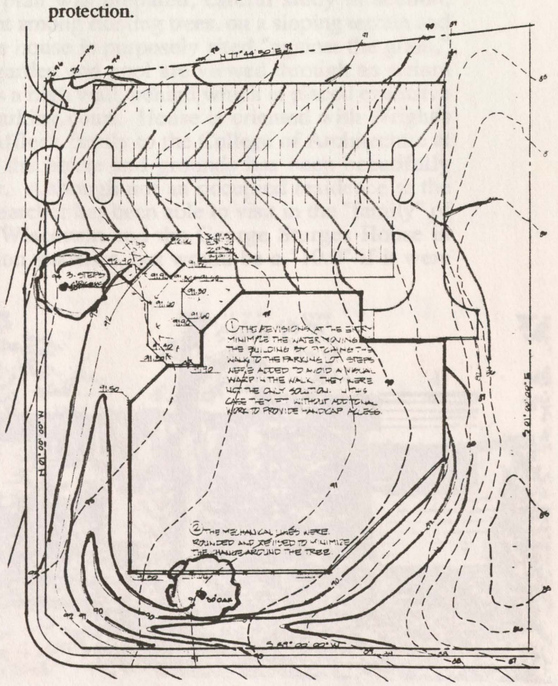


The dramatic Norman Lykes House, sited on the side of a mountain near Phoenix, Arizona, presents a prime example of a need to develop a grading plan and employ sensitive earthwork and hydrology skills prior to construction.

Grading and Earthwork. Examples of basic earthwork information such as have yet to be discovered on a site plan from Wright's office.



(Top) Shows engineering information such as one-foot existing contours, spot elevation, necessary dimensions to stake out building, parking lot, sidewalks, and finished first-floor elevation. Two existing oak trees are marked for protection.



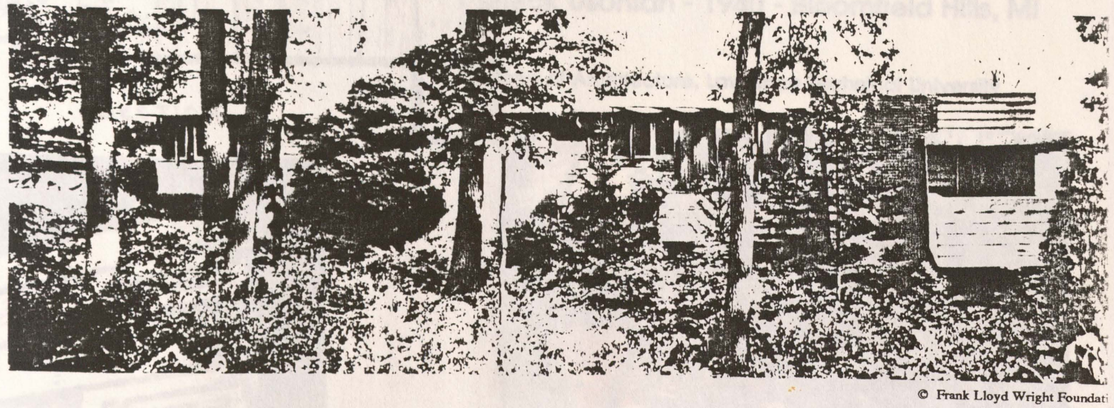
(Bottom) The lower drawing retains existing contours, shown in dashed lines, and adds proposed contours in solid lines, indicating the grading required to drain surface water away from the building, across the parking lot and walkways, to the lowest area in the southeast corner. The trees are saved by avoiding changes of grade near the roots.

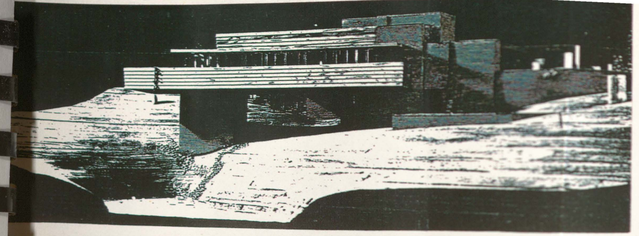
Source: *Landscape Architecture Construction*, 2nd Ed. Harlow C. Landphain & Fred Klott, Jr. © Elsevier Science Publishing Company, Inc., 1988.

It is possible to place a building on a site with minimum disturbance--usually, leveling--of the land under the structure so that contours appear to flow through the building. Some earthwork adjustment (grading), however, is essential to create a swale or slight valley to drain surface water away from the building and to create driveways and parking courts. Contours do not stop at the edges of buildings, roadways, or other structures, as indicated on all site plans in the FLLW archives. Some regrading was required at every site of Wright structures, even though this was not shown on site plans, and retaining walls were used freely. As William Storrer currently is preparing computer generated "as built" plans of FLLW structures for a forthcoming book, a valuable educational and historical service would be for someone to prepare "as built" site plans.

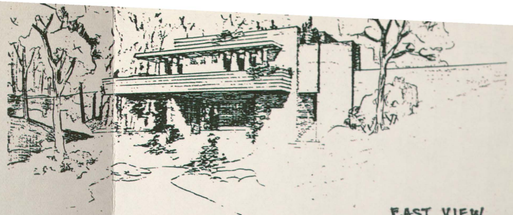
Many landscape architects would look at the masonry retaining base as an easy, but hardly an ecological, solution to respond to the natural order of the site, instead of a grading plan that avoids excessive retaining walls and earthen fills. In the design studio of landscape architects, every effort is made to balance cut and fill, disturb the natural land form as little as possible, and avoid the damming of storm water flow and other unnatural changes in the ecological system. This is sometimes the justification to build on piers and to use open wood decks, two methods rarely used by Wright. An alternative to the masonry retaining base that Wright used so frequently was his technique to cantilever the house out from the hillside in the dramatic fashion of the residences of Lloyd Lewis, George Sturges, George Affleck, John Pew, Arch Oboler, Frank Sander, Maurice Greenberg, or Frank Bott. This is an even more expensive solution, but one more sensitive to the environment.

The Gregor Affleck Residence (1940), Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, is one of Wright's finest examples of fitting a house to its site. Although no grading plan was prepared, careful study in section, perspective, and a topographic model assured placement among existing trees, on a sloping terrain and with maximum views toward an adjoining pond. The house is purposely sited "against the grain," using brick piers to bridge a small stream. A shade garden and pool are viewed through an atrium from the rooms above. The only negative site factor is a high wall, behind which is placed extensive earth fill to provide a flat space for a driveway and parking court. House is oriented with Wright's favorite setting of 30° east of south. Donated by the Affleck family to the College of Architecture at Lawrence Technological University, the exterior of the house and grounds has been beautifully maintained with restoration underway on the interior. Although not an occupied residence at the present time, this large Usonian is the only one the researcher has been able to visit in the "family" of similar houses that include the John Pew House in Wisconsin and the George Sturges House in California. The house is not included in the evaluation statistics, but would be a "10.0" if it were occupied.

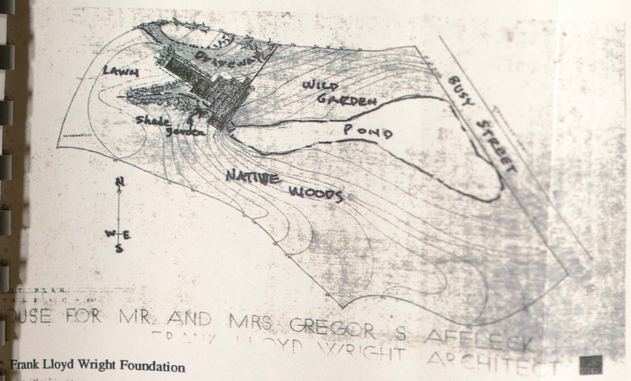


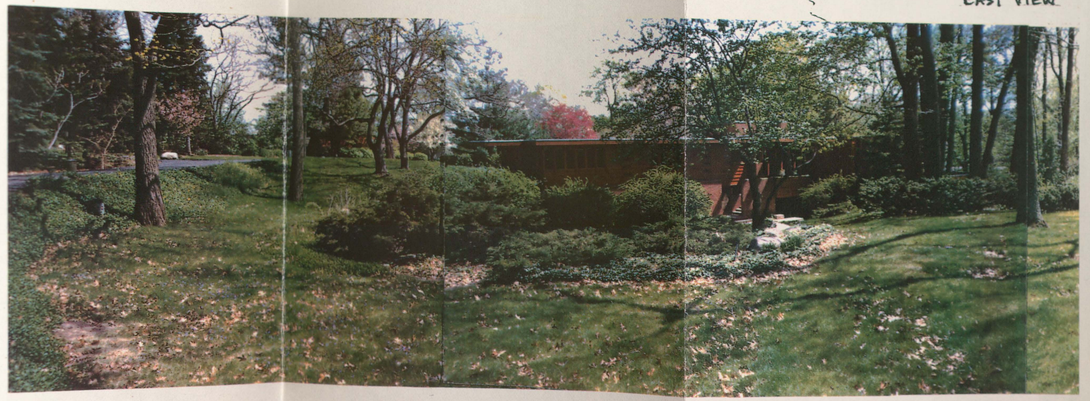


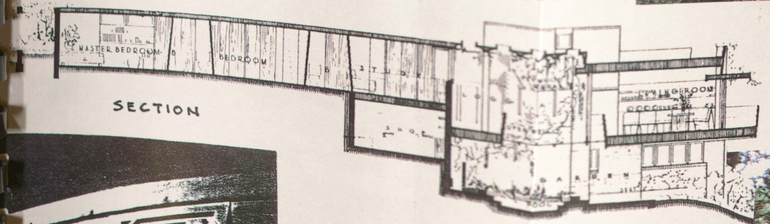
MODEL



EAST VIEW





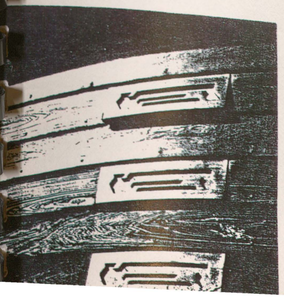


SECTION

SOUTHWEST VIEWS
MAY 5, 1991

George Affleck Usonian - 1940 - Bloomfield Hills, MI

Owned by College of Architecture, Lawrence Technical University



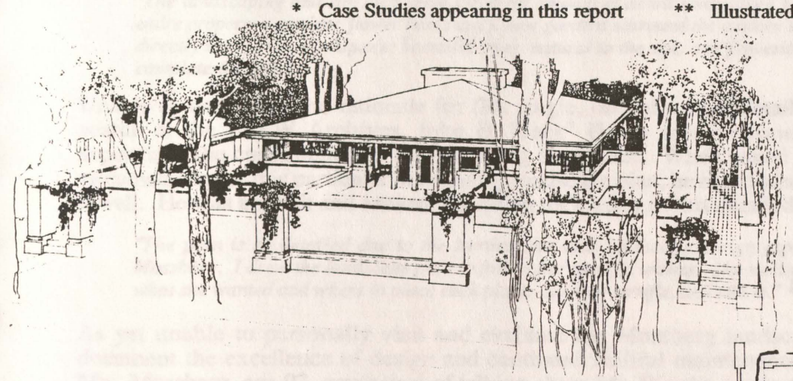
FRETTED BOARDS
ALLOW NAT...

Landscape Design and Planting Plans

Perhaps more than any other famous architect, Frank Lloyd Wright created an "experience" for the approach to the main entrance of his buildings, including for his smaller "affordable" houses. A majority of his residential designs contained both a formal, or ceremonial, and a nearby family, or service, entrance. The ceremonial access generally contained an entry garden with plants in formal geometric planting beds, flower boxes, and/or urns. Sometimes, the family entry was by way of a porte-cochere. Examples are represented by the following clients:

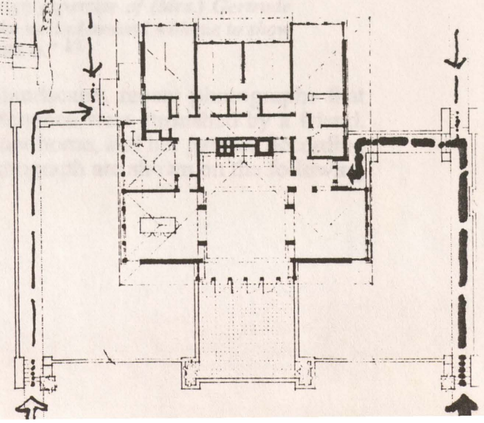
- Blossom (Chicago, IL)
- McArthur (Chicago, IL)*
- Walter M. Gale (Oak Park, IL)
- Ms. T. Gale (Oak Park, IL)*
- Winslow (River Forest, IL)
- Moore (Oak Park, IL)*
- Robie (Chicago, IL)
- Tomek (Riverside, IL)*
- Coonley (Riverside, IL)*
- Willits (Highland Park, IL)*
- Cheney (Oak Park, IL)**
- Gilmore (Madison, WI)
- Davidson (Buffalo, NY)
- FLLLW Residence (Oak Park, IL)
- Williams (River Forest, IL)
- Fricke-Martin (Oak Park, IL)
- Thomas (Oak Park, IL)
- Davenport (River Forest, IL)
- I. Roberts (River Forest, IL)
- May (Grand Rapids, MI)
- Little (Peoria, IL)
- Heusley (Oak Park, IL)
- Westcott (Springfield, OH)
- Heath (Buffalo, NY)
- Baldwin (Kenilworth, IL)
- Gridley (Geneva, IL)
- Millard I (Highland Park, IL)
- Baker (Wilmette, IL)*
- Ingalls (River Forest, IL)*
- Irving (Decatur, IL)
- Mueller (Decatur, IL)
- Amberg (Grand Rapids, MI)
- Balch (Oak Park, IL)
- Adams (Oak Park, IL)
- Brigham (Glencoe, IL)
- Booth (Glencoe, IL)
- Perry (Glencoe, IL)
- Kissam (Glencoe, IL)
- Bach (Chicago, IL)
- Bogk (Milwaukee, WI)
- Allen (Wichita, KA)
- Barnsdall (Los Angeles, CA)
- Millard II (Pasadena, CA)
- Storrer (Hollywood, CA)
- Freeman (Los Angeles,CA)
- Ennis (Los Angeles, CA)
- Taliesin I-III (Spring Green.WI)**
- Jones (Tulsa, OK)
- Kaufmann / Fallingwater (PA)**
- Jacobs I (Madison, WI)
- Willey (Minneapolis, MN)**
- Hanna (Stanford, CA)
- Rosenbaum (Florence, AL)
- Johnson /Wingspread (Racine, WI))
- Stevens/Auldbrass(Yemassee, SC)*
- Am. System Ready-Cut Bungalows (several locations)
- Sturges (Brentwood Hts., CA)
- Lewis (Libertyville, IL)
- Paulson (Phoenix, AZ)
- Affleck (Bloomfield Hills, MI)**
- Miller (Charles City, IA)
- McCartney (Kalamazoo, MI)
- Wall (Plymouth, MI)
- Walter (Quasqueton, IA)
- Smith (Bloomfield Hills, MI)*
- Mossberg (South Bend, IN)**
- Palmer (Ann Arbor, MI)*

* Case Studies appearing in this report ** Illustrated in this report



Cheney House, Oak Park, Illinois. 1904. "Designed when I was still with Adler and Sullivan in 1893—built several years later."

Entrance Sequence



Cheney House. Unfortunately, the major privacy walls have been lowered and/or destroyed, and the garden terraces never have been graded properly to accommodate the intended gardens. This charming house could still appear as in Marian Mahoney's drawing, but recent restoration efforts are not following the original landscape plan.

Wright demonstrated his mastery over standard urban lots by pushing some of his houses as close to one property line as possible. When this was the north line, as it usually was, it provided a useful southern expanse left open for family activities and gardening. Examples of this "zero lot line" technique include:

- Moore (Oak Park, IL)
- May (Grand Rapids, MI)
- Turkel (Detroit, MI)
- Fricke-Martin (Oak Park, IL)
- W. E. Martin (Oak Park, IL)
- Tomek (Riverside, IL)
- Westcott (Springfield, OH)
- Willey (Minneapolis MN)

Most of the planting plans located in the FLLW Archives--or "landscaping," as it is frequently referenced--are rough sketches of suggested mass plantings added to the site plan, without principles of planting design or artistic composition having been applied. Many appear as smudges from having been drafted with a soft pencil and are intentionally shown diagramic, rather than specific. Apparently, this type of planting plan was generally sufficient to fulfill Wright's standard contract, which stated, "The Personal Architectural Services of Frank Lloyd Wright.....invariably includes the planting of the grounds.....as part of the building scheme."

Examples of such planting schemes are shown on foldout pages 13 and 16. Many of these "suggested plantings" are shown only at the corners of the house, or along a driveway, forecourt, or terrace edge. Some indicate plantings only in planting boxes. None of this group establish a planting design over the entire site. Plantings and other site features appear more as an apparent afterthought, or cosmetic application, rather than as part of a unified design such as was seen in Wright's earlier years. More than one-half of the site plans located and studied to date, not including those especially prepared for the Wasmuth folio, show *no proposed plantings*; existing trees are indicated in most cases, as these were surveyed as part of the topographic mapping.

Of Wright's last one-hundred site plans, several indicate a list of suggested new plantings, but only one has a complete, property-wide design for "planting of the grounds," as promised in the contract. This plan is for the Mossberg residence in South Bend, Indiana. Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, in his text for the Mossberg Residence (*Monograph 7*), states:

> *"The landscaping and site plan show the great amount of detail study taken by the architect to make the entire property a garden: flower boxes and flower gardens surround the outdoor terrace; kitchen gardens are directly next to the workspace; beautiful trees, natural to the site, and flowering shrubs specially planted complete the site."*

Unable to determine the rationale for this single, one-of-a-kind detailed design surfacing during a search at the FLLW Archives, John H. "Jack" Howe was contacted, since it was he who had supervised the construction of the Mossberg Residence. When asked if he remembered the special circumstances of this particular outstanding landscape plan, he responded that he did indeed remember it well. He was implicit and excited in reciting the history of this detailed plan:

> *"The plan is so detailed due to the horticulture and landscape design expertise of (Mrs.) Gertrude Mossberg. I drew the landscape plan to follow her specific wishes. She walked around with me to show what she wanted and where to place each plant. She was terrific, and still is."* [11]

As yet unable to personally visit and evaluate the Mossberg landscape, recent photographs that document the excellence of design and continued skillful maintenance were furnished by a friend. Mrs. Mossberg, age 93, never tires of talking about Mr. Wright, her home, and her garden, according to her granddaughter, Jill Hillman. The Mossberg plan and a photograph are shown on the following page.

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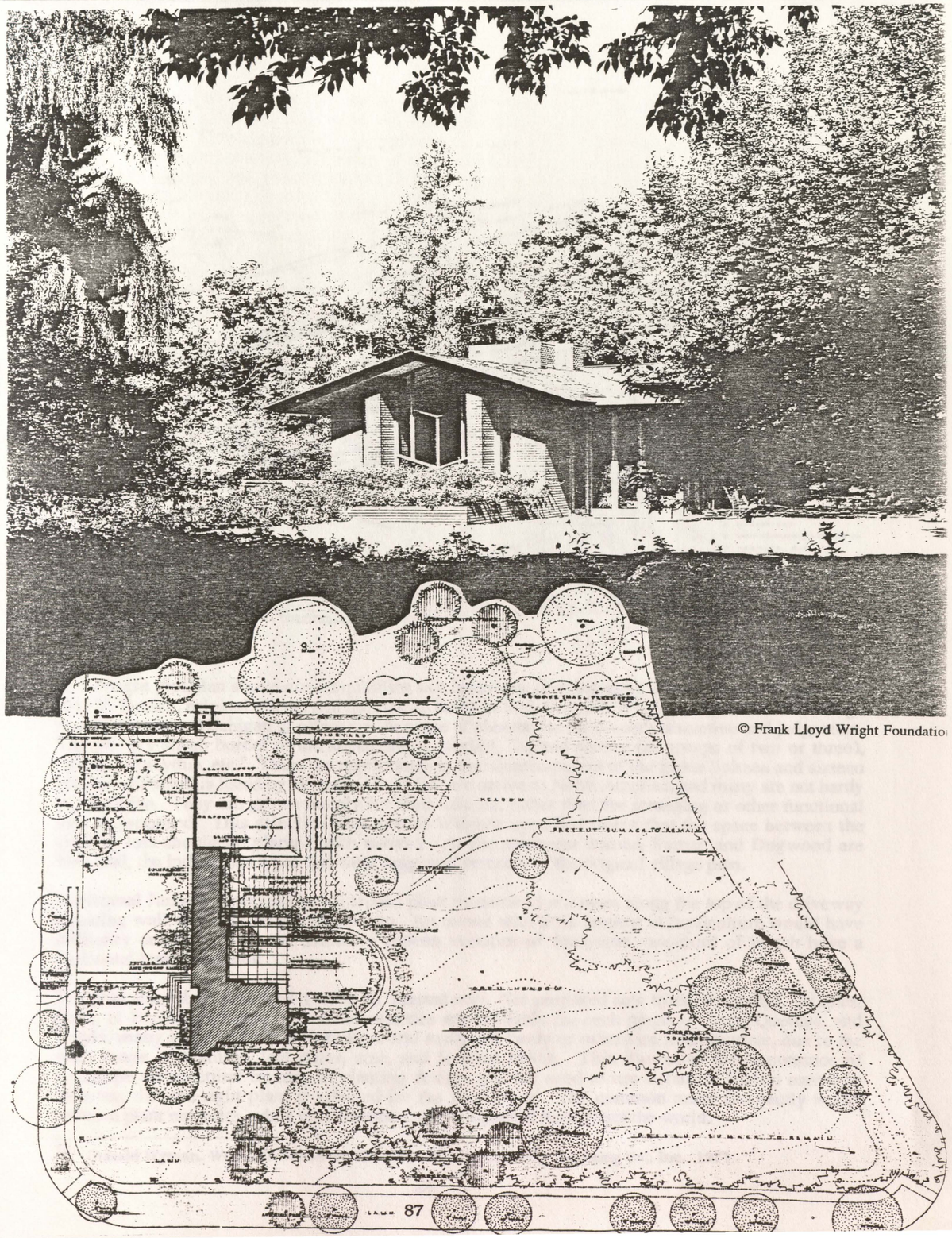
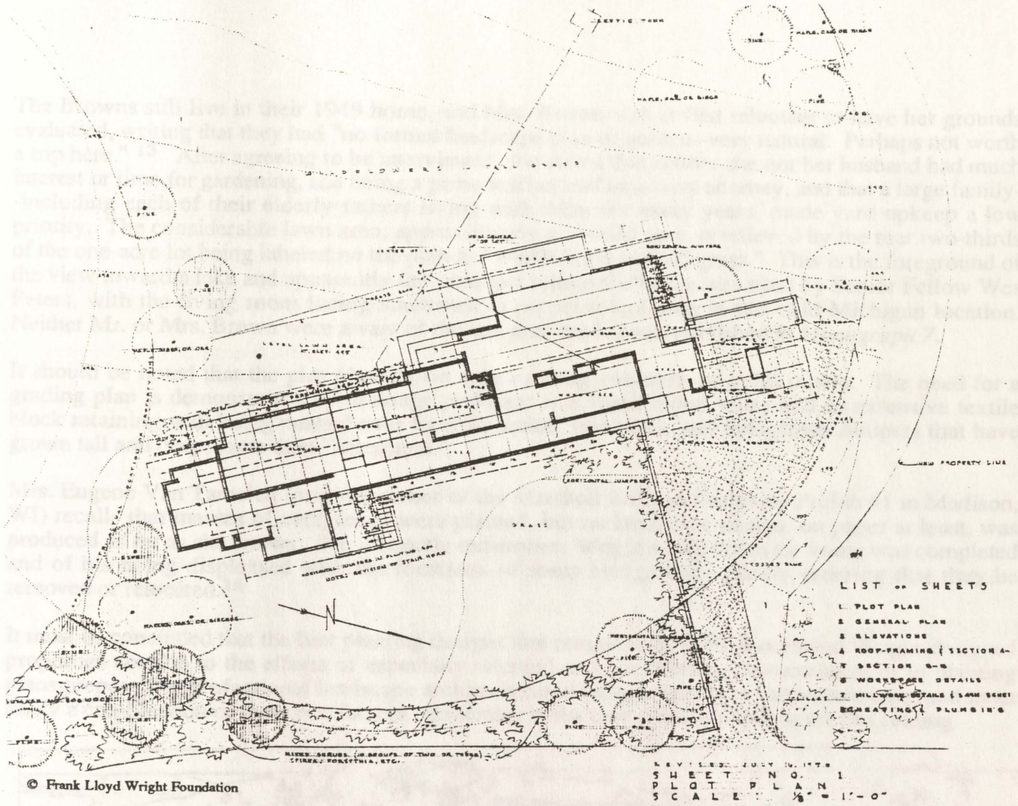
11 Telephone conversation with researcher, September 1991.





The Wright plot plan above *almost* qualifies as a landscape planting plan. Prepared for Mr. and Mrs. Eric V. Brown, original clients and the first to build in Parkwyn, the Wright-designed model village near Kalamazoo, Michigan, it offers a wide range of choices for the owner's discretion and judgement. The privacy shrub border at the street line is labeled, "Mixed shrubs (in groups of two or three), Spiraea, Forsythia, etc." There are approximately two dozen species of the genus Spiraea and sixteen species of Forsythia listed by Wyman. [12] A few are native to North America, and many are not hardy in Michigan. They are grown mainly for their flowers, rather than for screening or other functional use, as proposed. This selection does not fit Wright's specified intent that the space between the circular lots should be planted with natives. At the southeast corner, Sumac and Dogwood are indicated, the indigenous types that were suggested on notes of the original village plan.

Horizontal Juniper, a popular but overused plant, is named for a mass along the top of the driveway retaining wall and in three planting boxes. An owner with little interest in horticulture would have difficulty selecting from the available sixteen varieties of Juniperus, one-third of which have a horizontal branching habit.

The plan also labels proposed trees in an unusual way. Six proposed new trees are labeled, "Maples, Oaks, or Birches." Again, dozens of varieties are available for each genus of Acer, Quercus, and Betula, many suitable for this plant zone and many not hardy or otherwise inappropriate, due to the wide range of textures, leaf color, size, and fruiting habits. This illustrates the importance of landscape architectural training in planting design, and the need to use botanical (Latin) names to ascertain that the right plant is selected for the right place. The common name frequently varies between plant nurseries, while the scientific name is standard throughout the world.

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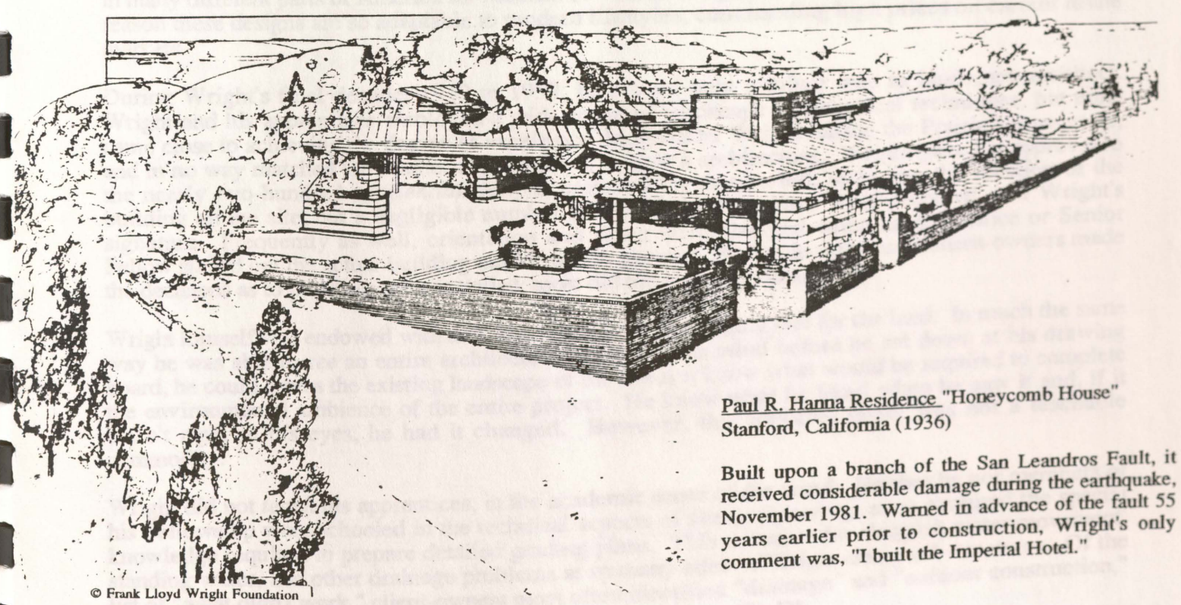
12 Donald Wyman, *Wyman's Gardening Encyclopedia.* Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1971.

The Browns still live in their 1949 home, and Mrs. Brown was at first reluctant to have her grounds evaluated, writing that they had "no formal landscape plan or garden--very natural. Perhaps not worth a trip here." [13] After agreeing to be interviewed, she stated that neither she nor her husband had much interest or time for gardening, she being a piano teacher and he a busy attorney, and that a large family--including each of their elderly fathers living with them for many years, made yard upkeep a low priority. The considerable lawn area, approximately one-third acre, is relieved by the rear two-thirds of the one-acre lot being labeled on the plan as "wildflowers and tall grass." This is the foreground of the view toward a lake and apparently the principal reason the house was sited by Senior Fellow Wes Peters, with the living room facing southwest, a proper orientation in this cold Michigan location. Neither Mr. or Mrs. Brown were aware of the site plan until it was published in *Monograph 7*.

It should be noted that the plot plan shows only *existing* contours, as in all others. The need for a grading plan is demonstrated by drainage problems at a "mud room" entry and an extensive textile block retaining wall being pushed over by frost action, tree roots, and overgrown Junipers that have grown tall and deep, more than "horizontal."

Mrs. Eugene Van Tamelen (original owner of the Marshall Erdman Company Prefab #1 in Madison, WI) recalls that masses of evergreens were planted, but no landscape design, on paper at least, was produced as far as she knows. She distinctly remembers Wright's visit when the home was completed and of his being displeased with the locations of some evergreens, quickly ordering that they be removed or relocated.[14]

It must be concluded that the best planting designs that remain to be seen at occupied Wright-designed properties are due to the efforts of especially talented and hardworking homeowners or to planting plans prepared by professional landscape architects hired independently by the homeowner, and most likely a combination of these two factors. Examples in the case studies help support this finding.



© Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

Paul R. Hanna Residence "Honeycomb House"
Stanford, California (1936)

Built upon a branch of the San Leandros Fault, it received considerable damage during the earthquake, November 1981. Warned in advance of the fault 55 years earlier prior to construction, Wright's only comment was, "I built the Imperial Hotel."

13 Note (undated) received by researcher in late April, 1991.
14 Personal conversation with researcher on May 9, 1991.

V. CONTRADICTIONS

As this research has progressed, it has become increasingly evident that there is a contradiction between designs originating from Wright's studio prior to and following World War II, between the era when Wright was more personally and intimately involved with siting and construction of a property and when he was not. Throughout his career, Wright wrote and spoke a lot about *integrity* as a quality of his architecture. Unfortunately, he did not specifically uphold *site integrity*, nor did he practice it with zeal much beyond the great landmark building designs of his early years.

In his book *The Natural House* (1954), Wright wrote:

> *"Surveyors do not seem to have learned that the south is the comforter of life, the south side of the house the 'living'side. Ordinarily, the house should be set 30° to 60° to the south, well back on its site so that every room in the house might have sunlight at some time in the day. If, however, owing to the surveyor, the house must face square north, we always place the clerestory (which serves as a lantern) to the south so that no house need lack sunshine. It is a somewhat expensive way to overcome the surveyor's ruse."*

It is unclear why Wright placed blame on surveyors when, with few exceptions, the houses of his design during the 1950s were sited on large properties where the architect should have had the control to orient the living side as he wished. As previously explained, Wright seemed to use the 30-60° triangle to establish the orientation of the house, irregardless of topography and often enough to be more than a coincidence.

With many of Wright's models, of course, flexibility was inherent in the design, to permit construction in many different parts of America for families of various compositions. This built-in flexibility is one reason these designs are so adaptable to modern lifestyles, commanding high prices on current resale markets.

During Wright's final decade, 1949 to 1959, he played only a minor role as landscape architect. Wright and his apprentices employed a wide range of landscape architectural techniques, but none came close to achieving the degree of excellence designed by Wright during the Prairie House years, and in no way matched the aesthetic greatness of Wright's architecture. Wright gave his approval to the nearly two-hundred *residential designs* prepared for this period, including the location of the building on the site, but a negligible number of actual *planting plans* were prepared over Wright's signature. Frequently as well, orientation and siting were changed when an apprentice or Senior Fellow staked out the actual building outline on the ground. Except in rare cases, client-owners made the decisions as to plantings to be installed; most did the planting themselves.

Wright himself was endowed with an innate sensitivity and natural *feel* for the land. In much the same way he was able to *see* an entire architectural design in his mind before he sat down at his drawing board, he could assess the existing landscape of the site and know what would be required to complete the environmental ambience of the entire project. He knew what he liked when he saw it and, if it wasn't right in his eyes, he had it changed. However, this intuitive talent was not a teachable commodity.

Wright did not *teach* his apprentices, in the academic sense of the word. Neither he nor members of his Fellowship were schooled in the technical aspects of site engineering; none acquired the special knowledge required to prepare detailed grading plans. This accounts for sluggish water movement, standing water, and other drainage problems at so many sites of Wright-designed structures. Of the list of "what didn't work," client-owners most often identified "drainage" and "outdoor construction," along with "energy conservation" (See Research Forms, Appendix D).

When several former apprentices were unofficially questioned as to how they acquired their landscape design background, they recounted being advised to look around and specify plants that were native or naturalized in the climatic zone of their projects. Scientific plant names were used rarely. In most cases, they indicated plant masses by symbols, with the actual selection made by a Senior Fellow, if done at all. In a landscape architectural studio, such schematic sketches would be followed by an entire series of detailed studies--including earthwork and drainage, retaining walls, fountains and pools, site furnishings, lighting, plant materials, and specifications for site preparation and planting. (Note that plant material selection is one of the *final* steps in the landscape architectural design process.)

Having heard and videotaped Katherine Jacobs describe how Wright walked over their farm and pointed his cane at the exact spot where they were to excavate for the prototype solar hemicycle, it was disarming to learn that Wright saw but one-third of the homes of the thirty-four extant First Families contacted during this research. It also was disconcerting to learn that the first Jacobs house was designed for a different site, with the plan then "flopped" to reorient it to the lot where it finally was built. However, this happened with some frequency. As far back as 1905, Walter Burley Griffin, when handling studio matters while Wright was in Japan, suggested that the preliminary plan then being proposed for the Sutton Residence could be reversed if, in the client's judgment, "it fitted the site and outlooks by turning it end to end." [15] One of the finest landscaped Usonians was rotated 90 ° on its site at the request of the owner (See Case Study S-332). The Loren Pope House in Falls Church, Virginia (1940) is another case in point.

"Poplar Misconception" [16]

The consultant's architectural report states that when the Loren Pope House was sited, the apprentices assigned to stake it out discovered that the topographic survey was incorrect, with the site sloping more steeply than indicated on the drawing. The floor plan was rotated 135° around a large tulip poplar to avoid grading that would kill the tree. Mr. Pope, poking fun of the frustrated attempts, dubbed his house "Poplar Misconception." The dining room planned to face south, now faced northwest, and the preferred northern view from the living room was lost. Most strangely, the elaborate cantilevered dining room trellis was no longer needed, but Wright chose not to alter the trellis or other details to reflect the new siting. Later, he wrote to Pope, "This placing of the house is much better orientation with sunlight and a less formal attitude--throughout. More our stuff, I believe."

Wright's landscaping intentions for the Pope site never were drawn in detail, but his primary concern was to grade a level grassy terrace behind the house to be framed by a semi-circular line of planting which Wright called a "berry hemicycle." (See drawing "1940 VA" in upper right-hand corner, page 13.) Pope planted between 100 to 200 laurel trees at the edge of the hemicycle, but many of the fragile twelve-inch seedlings did not survive. The Popes transplanted dogwood, laurel, and rhododendron from the nearby woods, edged the driveway with barberry julianus, and added Canadian hemlocks and one Southern Magnolia in the unplanned and piecemeal approach used by new homeowners everywhere, including some Wright First Families. The magnolia grew quickly and was partially masking the house when Wright visited several years later; he asked if Pope was trying to ruin the house.

Pope conceived the design and built a brick patio outside the dining area, together with a large screened porch off the living room, without being provided a plan or details from Taliesin. Wright gave his approval to these items on his next visit.

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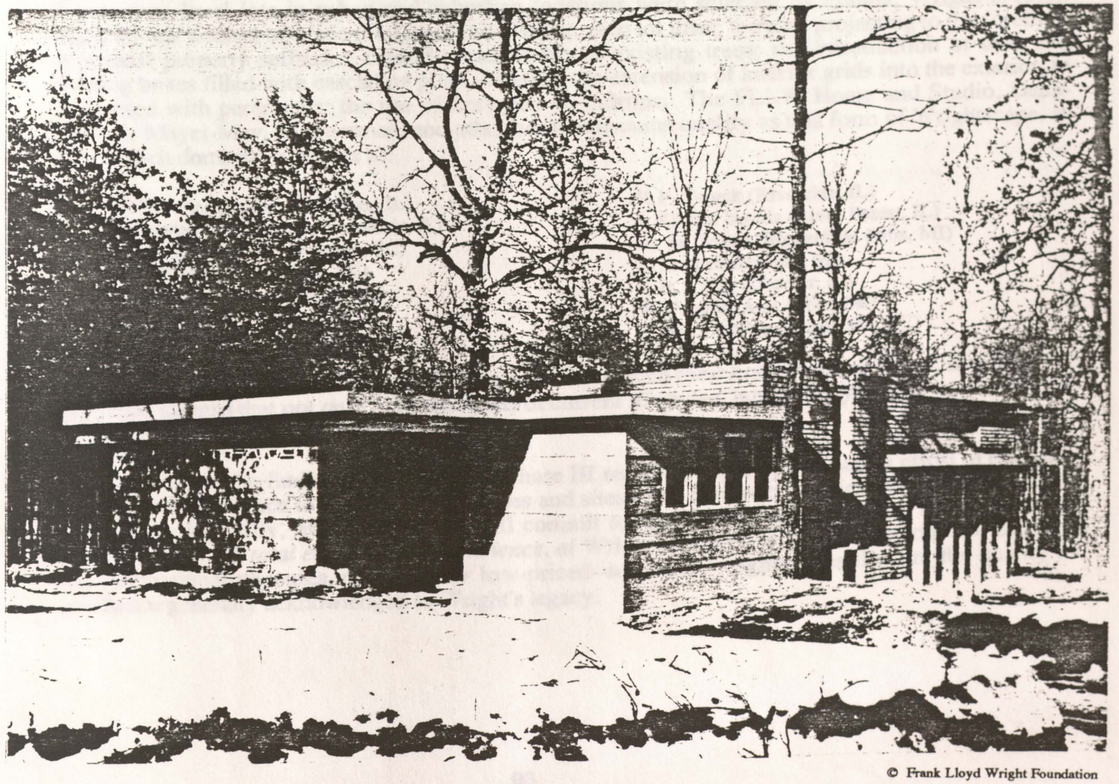
15 Don L. Morgan, "A Wright House on the Prairie," *The Prairie School Review*, Vol. II, No. 3, 3rd Quarter, 1965.

16 Information excerpted from *Pope-Leighey House: Report to the National Trust for Historic Preservation*, Lysman Davis, Architects, Washington, D.C., 1987.

Like the Herbert Jacobs family, the Popes lived in their Usonian house only a few years, selling to the Leighey family, who occupied it more than twenty years. When rights-of-way for Interstate 66 were surveyed and threatened the destruction of house and site, the NTHP moved the house to Woodlawn Plantation, at the edge of George Washington's Mount Vernon estate. Once again, the house was reoriented, this time rotated 70° from its former solar position. Marjorie Leighey has been quoted as "not pleased with the new orientation," since this orientation creates an ambiance and array of moods entirely foreign to those she experienced as a resident. As a house museum, the Pope-Leighey House has been labeled by consulting architects as having an "orientation that is a reasonably acceptable setting for the house " (Architect's report).

The approach by driveway should be considered totally unacceptable, however, since the house was relocated downhill so that "the roof is unflatteringly visible from the nearby higher ground" and it "was neither conceived nor built to be viewed from above " (Architect's report).

Still, the worse-case scenario of the Pope-Leighey was to come some ten years later, when the house began to sink, crack, and develop sags in its ceiling. This was due to its having been relocated onto a site with earth fill of up to three feet over unsuitable silty, sandy, and clay soils. Once considered for relocation a second time, large sums of money were spent during the early-1990s to stabilize the house, rather than move it again. Even three decades after Wright's death, one of Wright's architectural gems--in this case a "protected" national treasure rescued from bulldozers--faced other types of destruction because of the lack of advanced soil studies, site engineering, and proper consideration given for solar orientation.



VI. QUINTESSENTIAL WRIGHTSCAPES

"My prescription for a modern house: first, a good site. Pick one that has features making for character....then, build your house so that you may still look from where you stood upon all that charmed you and lose nothing of what you saw before the house was built, but see more."

FLLW, in an address to the association of Federal Architects, 1937

Wright sought to make his houses look as if they could exist nowhere but on the site where they stood. While he did not always succeed, as evidenced throughout this report, this was his intent. When executed to fruition, the result was a house like no other. Selected examples that clearly fulfill Wright's prescription include:

Wright / *Taliesin* (Spring Green, WI)
Kaufman / *Fallingwater* (Bear Run, PA)
Reisley (Pleasantville, NY)
Hardy (Racine, WI)
Miller (Charles City, IA)
George Millard (Highland Park, IL)
W. A. Glasner (Glencoe, IL)
George Affleck (Bloomfield Hills, MI)

All of these examples happen to be sited on rugged topography, with the architecture becoming an integral part of the natural environment of the site. This does not imply that organic architecture cannot be in harmony with a level parcel of land, but Wright clearly personally preferred, and encouraged his clients, to locate property that noone else wanted, property that possessed singular character and sense-of-place.

When more level lots in urban and suburban locations were selected by clients, Wright *created* character and a sense-of-place through manipulation: zero lot lines; terraces projecting to the forefront of normal property setbacks; careful preservation of existing trees; the introduction of urns and planting boxes filled with cascading plant varieties; the extension of interior grids into the exterior, to be planted with perennials; the use of floricycle backdrops. The FLLW Home and Studio, Dana-Thomas, Mayer-May, Zimmerman, and other house museums qualify as this form of Wrightscape, as well as such domestic treasures as:

Mrs. Thomas Gale (Oak Park, IL)
Coonley Coach House (Riverside, IL)
C. Leigh Stevens (Yemasee, SC)
D. Weisblat (Galesburg, MI)
H. Mossberg (South Bend, IN)
R. Carlson (Phoenix, AZ)
B. Adelman (Phoenix, AZ)
F. F. Tomek (Riverside, IL)
J. Kibben Ingalls (River Forest, IL)
M. M. Smith (Bloomfield Hills, MI)
E. Pratt (Galesburg, MI)
E. P. Irving (Decatur, IL)
W. Palmer (Ann Arbor, MI)
G. & C. Austin.(Greenville, SC)

Current occupants responsible for these properties have done their homework well and have effected landscape designs that not only meet the needs of current lifestyles, but *truly reflect the environmental ambiance of Wright's original intent.*

Perhaps some of the findings of this and the Phase III research will help initiate an effort to establish standards of excellence to which the landscapes and sites of all residences designed by Wright will be measured. Hopefully, owner-occupants will commit to, and Wright devotees will insist upon, the restororation of the *total environmental ambience,* of Wright-designed properties--interior *and* exterior, whether national treasures, moderate, *or* low-priced--to create Wrightscapes that are the quality of excellence generally acknowledged as Wright's legacy.

VII. POSTSCRIPT

My informal study of Frank Lloyd Wright's landscapes began at the onset of his final decade. Initiating this research study three decades after his death, and completing this phase of my investigative efforts as two of those interviewed celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of the construction of the houses in which they reside, I now pause to contemplate the next steps that appear on the horizon.

This research still has many loose ends: sites yet unseen, First Families to be interviewed, and other key people that need to be consulted before a final analysis can be made. Through the research conducted under this grant, it has become apparent that the most worthwhile information that can be obtained is from the First Families, who communicated and interacted personally with Wright during the design and construction of their residences, and from the apprentices or Fellows most personally involved with design and construction. Only they can provide insight into Wright's design intent, the problems that were encountered or the solutions explored, and the rationale for final configurations--points frequently analyzed by architectural and journalism critics sometimes lacking a qualified background to make such judgements.

Many of these preliminary conclusions will be argued and some will be disproven. This is as it should be for a project this all encompassing; the evaluation of the landscapes of Frank Lloyd Wright has never before been attempted. It will have served its purpose if it encourages private owners to undertake the kind of in-depth research that preceded the restoration of the FLLW Home and Studio, the Kaufmann, May, and Dana houses, and other edifices now open to the public. It will have been worthwhile if it prevents any more destruction of the type that resulted from saving an endangered landmark, but relocating it with an orientation foreign to its former occupants, such as happened with the Pope-Leighey Usonian house in 1964 and the Stockman Prairie house in 1990.

Future grant funding (Phase III) will be applied towards completing research on Wright's First Families and apprentices actively involved in on-site supervision; formatting a book outline for circulation to appropriate publishing houses; and analyzing some twenty-hours of raw videotape footage (8mm) acquired through interviews and site evaluations to edit together a storyboard to be used for fundraising to produce a broadcast quality film/video documentary.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Landscape Architects Known to have Developed Plans for Wright Properties

Walter Burley Griffin (1867-1937)

"It was Griffin who perhaps most completely articulated the Prairie School of landscape design. His obscurity, due in part to the attention given Wright, is both regrettable and undeserved. Despite being overshadowed by Wright and the outspoken Jensen, Griffin's own talent enabled him to function simultaneously as an architect and as a landscape architect. The dual roles complemented and enhanced one another and, coupled with his holistic vision, enabled him to create integrated environments." [17]

This able Wright protege worked in the Oak Park studio from 1901 until 1905, under the unusual Wright-approved arrangement of working on studio jobs as well as independent projects as both an architect and landscape architect. Before graduating as an architect from the University of Illinois in 1899, Griffin had taken the only two landscape gardening and forestry courses offered, yet--upon graduation--used the title landscape architect and began at once to practice landscape architecture. His first commission was to prepare a landscape plan for the Illinois State Normal School at Charleston, completed before joining Wright. Wright referred to Griffin as a "draftsman" and "office supervisor," while Griffin described his position as "both an architect and landscape architect." Within his sphere of activity at Wright's studio, his specialty appeared to be the design of "sequestered private gardens," such as those he prepared for William E. Martin in Oak Park, Illinois and for William's brother, Darwin D. Martin, in Buffalo, New York. The Darwin Martin garden included an elaborate semi-circular planting bed called a "floricycle," which appears to be an advanced design of the Willits' planned front garden, most likely also the work of Griffin. Rather than collaborating with Wright, Griffin appears to have worked independently as landscape architect when it was time to consider the planting design, and not as site planner at the early stage of the design process.

After leaving Wright in 1905, Griffin's private practice combined architecture and landscape architecture, with a 1907 exhibit highlighting his work as landscape architect for the Chicago Architectural Club. Griffin became a close, personal friend of Jens Jensen, who became his role model and informal teacher of the principles and philosophy of the "prairie spirit" in landscape architecture. Following the abrupt closing of Wright's Oak Park office, and his departure for Europe, Griffin was called in by new owner Herman Von Holst and chief designer Marion Mahony to serve as landscape architect for unfinished projects started by Wright. These included residences in Decatur, Illinois for Adolph Mueller, Robert Mueller, and E. P. Irving--all designed in harmony within a park-like setting called Millikin Place. A beautiful entry gate of brick with harmonious wrought-iron light fixtures was designed jointly by Griffin and Mahony and appears almost as contemporary today as when built eighty years ago. The same year, Marion Mahony became Mrs. Walter Burley Griffin. From Australia in 1914, Marion Mahony Griffin wrote that she "saw the revolution in methods and results that took place when landscape architecture was made a part of architecture after Walter Burley Griffin joined the Oak Park Studio." [18] Their joint design for Australia's new capital city, Canberra, won the international competition, bringing world-wide fame to Griffin which led to his migration to Australia. Before leaving the United States, Griffin was to design, site and landscape twenty residences with an integrated greenway on each side of Willow Creek in Mason City, Iowa--one of the midwest's most attractive subdivisions. Known as Rock Crest-Rock Glen, it now furnishes a new, yet appropriate, neighborhood environment for the G. C. Stockman residence (1908), the oldest Wright-designed structure in Iowa, a historic structure rescued from the bulldozer and relocated in 1990 by the River City Society for Historic Preservation.

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17 Christopher D. Vernon, "Walter Burley Griffin, Landscape Architect," chapter in *The Midwest in American Architecture*, University of Illinois Press, 1990.

18 James Birrell, *Walter Burley Griffin*, University of Queensland Press, 1964.

Jens Jensen (1860-1951)

Identified by the New York Times as the "dean of American Landscape Architects," Jens Jensen settled in Chicago in 1884, after emigrating from Denmark. He advanced from a laborer for the West Chicago Park District to foreman of the parks in Chicago's most fashionable districts. He developed a lucrative private practice among those having estates along the wealthy North Shore, after a political dismissal in 1900. By 1906, he was back with West Parks as general superintendent and chief landscape architect. He is credited by Wilhelm Miller with giving the first public expression of the prairie spirit in landscape architecture, "....a regional manifestation of design tenets developed by Olmsted and other early landscape architects....meant to impart to the viewer the essence of America's heartland. (Jensen expressed)....the fervent belief that America would develop a new culture rooted in its own regional landscapes. His symbols became the hawthorne, with its horizontal branches mimicking the prairie; low, gentle contours repeating the midwestern plains, and spectacular rockwork and waterfalls, suggesting ravines and waterfalls found along Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River." [19]

Alfred Caldwell, an assistant to Jensen for five years, called him "a legend within his own lifetime." He lists Jensen's plant materials for one Chicago landscape plan as all native to Illinois: "The forests are maple and oak, elm and ash. Masses of wild crabapple, hawthorn, plum, cherry, sumach (sic) and dogwood push out into the meadow from the forest edge. Wild roses and prairie flowers are everywhere. The plants are used with consummate understanding of the processes of nature. The species possess the innate horticultural fitness to climate and topography. When associated with proper groups, they become at once the finest expensive formation....a conscious imaginative work of art, and not a duplication of nature. It is a structure created by the working of organic principles." [20]

Leonard Eaton, Jensen's biographer, has identified Jensen as the landscape architect for only two Wright projects, which he called Wright-Jensen "collaborations:" the Coonley House of 1908 in Riverside, Illinois, and the house for Mrs. Abby Longyear Roberts in Marquette, Michigan. In his 1964 book, *Landscape Artist in America: The Life and Work of Jens Jensen* (University of Chicago Press), he points out the basic difference in the manner with which the two designers treated the landscape: "The most remarkable quality of Jensen's art was its purity; he worked with natural materials and space, with no tricks or gimmicks." Eaton stated that Jensen never adorned (he considered it clutter) his designs with pergolas or gazebos, and any man-made structures were held to a minimum; had a deep knowledge of plant ecology and stressed to his clients that his gardens had a time dimension; his gardens purposefully presented one appearance in their youth and quite another in their maturity, and he was perfectly willing to let the birds do some of the planting for him. Eaton stated that Jensen did not like open porches or terraces buffering the house and linking the space between the inside and outside in a progressive transition, as did Wright, that Jensen's lawns or gardens would come right up to the doors of the residence so the user stepped directly into his natural landscape. There are other ways Jensen differed from Wright, as told in detail in Eaton's biography.

Professor Robert Grese of the University of Michigan currently is writing a book on Jensen and is following some leads that Jensen also may have prepared landscape plans for the 1912 Ravine Bluffs project (not supervised by Wright) in Glencoe, Illinois, and the 1912 William B. Greene home in Aurora, Illinois. These and possibly others by Jens Jensen currently lack sufficient evidence for authenticity; verification must await the discovery of letters or other documents.

Unable to find evidence to the contrary, I believe Jens Jensen was in each case brought in by the owner to landscape the properties after Wright had designed and sited the houses, and possibly even after the structures were completed. Except for the larger shade trees and a few of the older accent

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19 Stephen Christy, "Jens Jensen," *American Landscape Architecture.*

20 Alfred Caldwell, "Jens Jensen: The Prairie Spirit," *Landscape Architecture*, January 1961.

trees and shrubs, there is today little evidence of Jensen's planting designs at Wright sites. The formality of the gardens of the Coonley house do not suggest Jensen's signature, unless he designed the park portion of the estate, later subdivided for real estate.

Wright and Jensen were the best of friends for many years. Jensen was consulted when Mr. and Mrs. Wright were attempting to establish their ambitious "School of the Allied Arts" at the depth of the Great Depression. Reduced in scope, this evolved into the Taliesin Fellowship, where Jensen sometimes visited. However, a dispute occurred in 1936 at the Michigan residence of Abby Roberts after Wright had recommended that Jensen be brought in as a consultant (after the fact) because Mrs. Roberts was dissatisfied with the house siting. Disagreement over the planting of several maple trees resulted in a split between these brilliant designers--who might have co-produced great things, if only their egos had not intruded upon their friendship and respect for each other.[21] The disagreement over shade trees in front of the Roberts' windows is cited during an August 1989 videotaped interview with Wes Peters and a March 1990 videotaped interview with Cornelia Brierly.

It seems that Jensen served only as plantsman, which was his forte, rather than providing the full services of a landscape architect. This also can be said about the other landscape architects whose services were limited to preparing planting plans for Wright-designed houses--with the single exception of his son, Lloyd Wright.

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21 Harvey Einbinder, *An American Genius: Frank Lloyd Wright.*

Frank Lloyd Wright, Jr., Wright's eldest son, from 1919 to 1926 had an important role to play supervising and landscaping the senior Wright's California houses.

Lloyd drafted and traced drawings for his father, beginning at the age of nine. He attended the University of Wisconsin for two years until Wright arranged for him to join him in Italy to help prepare the final graphics for the Wasmuth Portfolio. He spent two or more months taking the grand tour of Europe, until his money ran out. Upon returning to the United States in February, 1911, he had decided to become a landscape architect, and he worked for a short time at the Harvard Herborium before attempting to become an apprentice with Olmsted and Olmsted in Boston. At that time, Frederick Law Olmsted had been dead for eight years; his son and stepson, Frederick Law (Jr.) and John Charles Olmsted, respectively, carried on the design tradition as senior partners in the firm, but did not operate an apprenticeship system. They did hire Lloyd Wright as a draftsman and, after about a year, sent him to San Diego to work for several months in the nursery established by Olmsted and Olmsted to provide plantings for an international exhibition to be held in 1915. Thus, Lloyd Wright, with no formal academic courses "picked up," as did his father, landscape design as well as architecture through on-the-job training. His solid grounding in plant material enabled him to work in partnership with another landscape architect in Los Angeles, as well as an urban planner and draftsman-delineator for jobs in California and New York. As early as 1917, he signed the plans of the Stephen Hunt house in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, as "Frank Lloyd Wright, Jr., Landscape Architect." In 1919, he returned to California to design and supervise the landscaping of Olive Hill and the Barnsdall house for his father and, between 1923 and 1926, he served as both construction superintendent and landscape architect for the Ennis, Freeman, Millard, and Storer residences. With his father in Japan for long periods during this time, he was in charge of major decisions and authorized many change orders that occurred during construction. As an outstanding delineator, he prepared perspective and working drawings for Wright's projects in Arizona before he set up his independent practice of architecture and landscape architecture. He finally obtained his own license to practice architecture in 1928, and his son Eric--who apprenticed at Taliesin--joined him in 1956.

Lloyd Wright provided the senior Wright with the longest association with a landscape architect in a true collaborative sense. Lloyd could not seem to avoid following in his father's footsteps--always solving a problem with an *organic* solution. To Lloyd, that meant "the man-made pattern which would not violate the site's natural vegetation or terrain."

> *"He went far beyond his father in finally taking over the continental and English tradition of manipulating the terrain and its vegetatiaon to establish the architecture and spaces of a site. In this sense, Lloyd's approach to landscape architecture was a direct and positive one, while his father--at least during the Oak Park years--was a neutral one.....A Prairie house of Frank Lloyd Wright may be somewhat nude and bare, if it is deprived of its vegetation, but the building itself still stands as a strong architectural statement. With Lloyd, the building, the exterior walls and stairs, the fountains and pools, together with the trees and other plants, form a complete tightly knit whole, and that part of the scheme made up of the four walls and roof was not enough to stand on its own, but must be related to the environment."* [22]

> *"Lloyd Wright's best known project is the Wayfarers Chapel in Rancho Palos Verdes, California, an assignment which extended from 1946 to 1971 and challenged his artistic and engineering skills in both architecture and landscape architecture."* [23]

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22 Harriette Von Breton, *Lloyd Wright Architect*, Exhibit catalog, U. of California, Santa Barbara, 1971.
23 Ernest O. Martin, *Lloyd Wright, A Biography*, Wayfarers Chapel, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA., 1988.

Thomas D. Church (1902-1978)

Thomas D. Church was a distinguished designer-teacher-author whose reputation and influence had worldwide significance. Known as the "Grand Old Man" of landscape architecture by his contemporaries, Thomas Church is credited as being one of the leaders in the modern movement of landscape architecture in California following World War II. Although not generally recognized, he had been practicing residential landscape design and installation, as well as teaching at Berkeley, since his graduation in 1922 from the Harvard School of Design with a masters in landscape architecture. He was the first to prepare planting plans for Wright properties, as a landscape architect with a professional degree.

Thomas Church worked on at least three Wright projects, hired independently by clients after the residence was built or construction was underway:

- Mr. and Mrs. Melvyn Maxwell Smith of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan (Case Study S-287). Church was engaged in the early 1960s to landscape their brick and cypress Usonian home, "Myhaven," after its completion.

- C. Leigh Stevens, owner of the 1939 Auldbrass Plantation outside of Yamasee, South Carolina (Case Study S-261). Church was engaged to prepare a landscape plan sometime in the early 1950s. The only correspondence that can be located is a two-line letter of transmittal to Wright from Church, dated April 8, 1953: "Mr. Leigh Stevens telephoned us today and asked that we send you the enclosed blueprints."

- Mrs. Clinton S. Walker, owner of the 1948 "Cabin on the Rock," near Carmel, California. This house, which Wright described as one of his favorites, is situated on a dramatic rocky site above Monteray Bay, facing the Pacific Ocean. Its hexagon plan, rock base, and blue metal roof have been described as both a "jewel" and a "ship being readied for sea." In his book, *Romanza: The California Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright,* David Gebhard states, "The dramatic, yet harmonic relationship of the house to its setting expresses Wright's own language of the organic--a oneness with the site--as well as the sympathetic hand of landscape architect, Thomas D. Church."
  Church, in his popular 1955 book, *Gardens are for People*, devotes two oversized pages to the house, with four photographs dated 1953. His text is simple and to the point: "The house, of native Carmel stone, is built on a rocky headland. Driftwood, washed up from the sea, is the sculptural interest. Shells, succulents, and seaweed decorate the garden."

Wright, without once mentioning Church by name dashed off one of his infamous letters when he learned that the client had commissioned Church. Known to have written nasty letters in his time, this letter (dated March 21, 1952) may tell how he really felt about landscape architects, or it might only have been a knee-jerk reaction to defend his right to select his own "professional vermin." The first two paragraphs of the letter follow:

> *""Dear Della Walker: Distressing news from several quarters. One of my former apprentices (no, not Mark Mills) says to Aaron Green, 'Someone has ruined Mr. Wright's house with landscaping.' Walter Olds, distressed, said, 'Mrs. Walker hired a professional landscaper to undo all Mr. Wright had done for her.' If you did employ one, it is the first time it has happened to me in a long lifetime of building. The first destructive insult. I don't believe it. Throughout the nation, these professional vermin plant a skirt of shrubbery around the house and stick up a couple of trees at the entrance. A William worse than Worster shack might be benefitted by this stock performance. Not so, the Cabin on the Rocks. Is all this true? The professional Worster side-kick is quoted as saying, 'I know Wright won't like what I've done,' showing that assassination was his intent.*

The balance of the letter deals with other matters, except to say, "I hope what I hear is not true, and love's labor not lost. I love the Cabin and had it in my heart as well as my head." Almost by return mail on March 27, the client wrote from Palm Springs:

> *"My Dear Mr. Wright: What a scolding!! And I didn't deserve it. Someone is trying to make trouble. Nothing has been done to harm our house. I had to get a contract for the driveway and grading and the bids were fantastic. I asked Tommy Church, whom I have known since he was a child, to help me and he got a reasonable bid with no charge. I planted myself about 2000 succulants or ice plants or brought rocks from the beach to put one of the 'maneating' clam shells on--in places other than where you said it should go. I went into the woods and got small pine trees, which all died. It is going to be difficult to find anything that will stand the wind and salt spray--planting young shrubs seems to be the answer but I cannot wait for them to grow (wish I could). I did not want grass to care for and Tommy suggested more gravel like the terrace, and I have put that in and like it, but if you do not, out it comes. No real change has been made, and there is no reason for anyone's quoting Tommy as saying that you would not like it. His one idea has been to follow the little sketches in planting that you made. My experience with you and in building the cabin has been one of the most delightful ones of my life, and I hope nothing will happen to mar it. You are supreme to me. Hope your trip will be all and more than you deserve. Very glad that you are well again. Affectionately, Della Walker."*

A. Edwin Bye, Jr.

"To create effectively, the landscape architect must work outdoors to 'feel' each rock and stone, the trees and vines, sand and earth, the sky and water, reflecting light and shadow, the mist, the snow and ice, the rain, the wind, and the odors and the noises that are all about us." [24]

A. E. Bye and Associates, landscape architects and site planners, were commissioned by Roland Reisley soon after the residence was built in the Usonia Homes community of Pleasantville, New York. He was called back to revise the landscape plan after a Wright-designed major addition was constructed in 1957. Bye, a Fellow in the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), received his degree in landscape architecture from Pennsylvania State University. His work has been widely published and he is author of *Abstracting the Landscape* (1990) and *Art into Landscape, Landscape into Art* (1983), which dedicates six pages of photographs to the Reisley House and describes how he arrived at the Reisley House scheme as follows:.

"Briefly, my approach was to use native plants, those that I found growing locally, or that I knew to be native to the Appalachian Mountains. Wright had done this at Fallingwater in Bear Run, Pennsylvania. When I visited this inspiring place, I was impressed that the landscaping was mostly done with the native Rosebay Rhododendron (Rhododendron maximum) prevailing in that area. Fallingwater was the key that led me to believe that I should follow this example for the Pleasantville house or any house that was built among native vegetation."

Mr. Bye's 1957 plan is most unusual, in that he used extensions of the geometric grid of the house as planting beds in a system often shown on the few detailed, but seldom executed, planting plans prepared by Wright's office. The plantings are not clipped intentionally to maintain a sharp straight edge, so a softer effect exists in reality than might appear from the plan. (See photo, below)

It is interesting that the Thomas Church "signature," even when associated with Wright-designed residences is obvious: large flowing masses or drifts of shrubs and flowers, following free-form curves. A. E. Bye on the other hand, although known most for his plans with an ecological basis using native plants, has prepared a plan that "reads" as Frank Lloyd Wright, not A. E. Bye. This is a tribute to Bye, as well as to Wright.

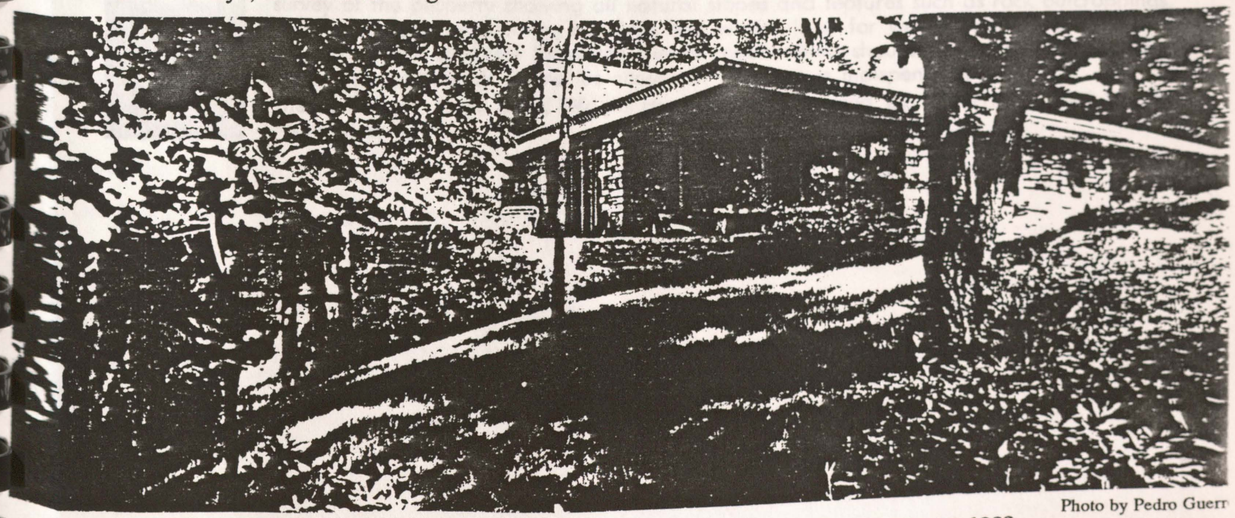


Photo by Pedro Guerr

24 A. E. Bye. Philosophical statement published in *Art into Landscape; Landscape into Art*, 1983.

THE PERSONAL ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT are available for ten percent of the cost of the completed building which invariably includes the planting of the grounds and major furnishings considered as part of the building scheme. The fee is the same for a million dollar building or for a five thousand dollar dwelling: divided in three parts as follows:

1 3% of proposed cost of the building when preliminary studies are accepted. These however may be modified without additional charge until entirely satisfactory to client and architect.

2 5% additional for the working drawings and specifications payable when in the architect's estimation they are complete and ready for bids but with the understanding that should the building cost more than the client has stipulated or is willing to pay, the architect will modify the drawings to bring the costs within reason. Adjustment of this second portion of the fee is to be made when plans are approved by the owner or when contracts are let.

3 2% to complete the fee of ten percent for the architect's supervision during construction. Payable from time to time during construction and when the building is completed to the client's satisfaction. A final adjustment of the fee according to the total cost of the completed building to bring the total fee of ten percent of completed cost exclusive of ground is to be made when requested by the architect.

Superintendence satisfactory to architect and client is to be arranged at the client's expense. Traveling expenses necessary and incurred by the architect in direct connection with his work are to be paid from time to time on architect's certificate.

The architect undertakes to itemize mill work and material for the building, lets contracts for piece work and eliminates the general contractor where possible by sending a qualified apprentice of the Taliesin Fellowship at the proper time to take charge, do the necessary shopping and hold the whole building operation together, checking cost layouts, etc., and endeavor to bring the work to successful completion. This apprentice is to be lodged and fed by the owner, his necessary traveling expenses paid for by the owner who also pays the apprentice $25.00 per week for his services so long as he is required on the work. This not only saves most of a general-contractor's fee but both client and architect are better assured of the results of such simplifications and extensions of space as are characteristic of the new methods of building which are inevitably involved.

Before the architect proceeds with the design of any building an accurate topographical survey of the property showing all natural slopes and features such as rock outcroppings, trees, etc., roads, neighboring buildings and service lines for water, sewer, gas and light together with a complete list of the client's requirements should be on record. Dwelling-houses upon urban lots will not be accepted. Acreage is indispensable.

The services of Frank Lloyd Wright are exclusively owned by The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation.

"THE LANDSCAPES OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT"

SURVEY OF ORIGINAL FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT CLIENTS STILL OWNERS OF WRIGHT DESIGNED RESIDENCES, 1991

By Charles E. Aguar, Professor of Landscape Architecture
(Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts)

Name of Original Client/Present Owner(s) _____

Residence was completed and first occupied _____ 19____

Addition(s) in 19 _____, 19 ____were ____ / were not ____ designed by Frank Lloyd Wright or Taliesin.

Fellowship Supervising Architect(s)/Apprentice(s) _____

Our _____ acre site is about ____ % lawn / ____ % planted trees and shrubs / ____ % left in a natural state. Of the introduced species, about ____ % are native to this area, such as:

_____

_____

Flowers include _____

_____

Members of our family did _____/ did not _____ determine what was to be planted. We installed about ____ % of the trees, shrubs, and flowers now growing on property.

Original residence construction was supervised by _____

Mr. Wright visited our site during 19 _____. Mr. Wright never visited our site _____.

The site plan (house location, landscape plantings) was drawn by _____

Our site plan shows house location ____, existing trees only ____, rough indication of future plantings (unnamed) ____ , proposed trees, shrubs, and other plantings (with plant list) ____, driveway ____, walkway _____, garden area _____, walls _____, and other site features, including _____

_____

I have never seen a site plan of our property _____

In 19 _____, we engaged _____ to prepare a landscape planting plan.

This plan was implemented completely ____ / about ____ % / is still being developed ____.

Our living room windows face _____ (direction), with the major views of _____

Roof overhangs are adequate to keep out sun and glare in summer. Yes ____ No ____ Until ____o'clock.

Roof overhangs are designed to allow winter sun to penetrate major living space. Yes_____. No ____.

Other shade for our windows is provided by trellis _____, vines _____, shade trees _____, curtains, blinds, or draperies ____.

The amount of window surface in our home is just right _____, excessive _____, could be greater on _____ (direction) side.

Accurate description of our site_____, representative photos_____, a site plan ____ may be found in the following books or articles:

_____

_____

The published photo(s) in _____ are not correct as to current landscape conditions because:

_____

The site/landscape plan published in _____ has been changed in the following ways:

_____

Our house location was changed from that shown in this site plan for the purpose of

_____

Our original driveway/auto court was constructed of _____. This is unchanged_____ The driveway is now paved in _____. Due to the topography of our site, we have retaining wall(s) with a maximum height of _____ feet above our driveway/auto court; maximum of ____ feet from the terrace/veranda to ground level.

Over the years, we have changed our landscape to meet our lifestyle needs or neighborhood conditions in the following ways: _____

_____

Other comments regarding our site/landscape: _____

_____

_____

On a scale of 1-10 (10 being "perfect"), I would judge our site features as follows:

_____ (a) House orientation (Winter sun where needed; summer sun-shading; views; privacy, etc.)

_____ (b) Energy conservation (Reasonable energy consumption both winter & summer, due to orientation, tree placement, etc.)

_____ (c) Outdoor construction (Driveway, parking, walls, terrace, etc. well designed/easy to maintain)

_____ (d) Landscape design (Unified plantings related to structure, native or appropriate material)

_____ (e) Relation to natural environment (Unity/harmony with natural surroundings)

_____ (f) Spatial relationships (Outdoor "rooms" & usable spaces -- more than decorative effect)

_____ (g) Outdoor living/recreation (space for cooking, dining, entertaining, children/play areas)

_____ (h) Adaptive Use (Landscape meets current lifestyle/changing family needs)

_____ (i) Indoor-Outdoor Relationships (Interior observer is drawn into outdoor space)

_____ (j) Utilitarian Functions (Grading, drainage, service areas operative, reasonable maintenance)

Comments on (a) to (j): _____

_____

_____

_____

If you are ever in our area, you may examine and videotape the exterior of our home and walk over the property for the purpose of educational research. _____

Telephone for an appointment: ( ) _____.

PLEASE CALL OR WRITE, IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS:
Charles E. Aguar, Professor of Landscape Architecture
School of Environmental Design, University of Georgia
609 Caldwell Hall / Athens, Georgia 30602

CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATION/INTERPRETATION OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT LANDSCAPES

(Applies to grounds and outdoor spaces only--not to residence or other major structures.)

THE _____ **RESIDENCE -- CITY OF** _____ #_____

Current Owner(s) _____ Built _____ Remodeled _____

Date _____ Weather _____ Investigator _____

YES	NO	
____	____	Landscape design is as impressive as FLLW's architecture.
____	____	Landscape design is compatible and in unity with FLLW's architecture.
____	____	Landscape design is compatible and in unity with the natural environment.
____	____	The built landscape creates space as outdoor rooms, contains surprises, lingering images; consists of more than cosmetic or decorative effect.
____	____	In-door-outdoor integration draws interior observer into the landscape.
____	____	Provision of space for play and entertainment of children/grandchildren.
____	____	Successful adaptation of spaces for current owners' life-style and self-espression.
____	____	Material/design of retaining walls, pavement, water features, etc. suitable to building style.
____	____	Circulation/driveway/walks/parking/service areas are functional without conflicting with architecture or ecological systems.
____	____	Successful solutions found for unsightly views/environmental intrusions, if a problem.
____	____	Grading/drainage system/other utilitarian aspects given aesthetic and ecological considerations, as well as functioning properly.
____	____	Design/implementation/current conditions provide good evidence of FLLW's contribution to landscape architecture.

RATING OF FUNDAMENTAL DESIGN CONSIDERATION (1-10)

POINTS (Maximum @ 10 each)

_____ **COMMUNITY** Visitor Impression. As viewed from public street _____ (5 pts.)

Visitor Impression. Entrance experience. _____(5 pts.)

_____

_____ **PRIVACY.** As needed, adequate privacy provided by screening from public view.

_____

_____ **UNITY.** Architecture/planting/outdoor furnishing details are compatible.

_____

_____ **HARMONY.** Line/form/texture/color of plant material fits both built/natural environment.

_____

_____ **SCALE.** Use/knowledge of plants (form/growth patterns/size/etc.) relates to scale of building/site/natural surroundings.

_____

_____ **SIMPLICITY.** Restraint in selection/arrangement; not just a horticultural collection.

_____

_____ **ARCHITECTURE-SITE RELATIONSHIP.** Structure is "of the site, not on it." (FLLW)

_____

_____ **ATMOSPHERE.** Overall character/mood/sense-of-place enhances FLLW architecture.

_____

_____ **PLANTINGS.** Maintained with natural look.. Wild/naturalized areas of site are managed accordingly. Flowers/vines in urns. Planters are discrete geometric spaces.

_____

_____ **MAINTENANCE.** Spraying/pruning/watering needs/maintenance awareness incorporated into design and managed appropriately.

_____

_____ **TOTAL POINTS** (100 Maximum)

As illustrated by this example, FLLW's success as a landscape architect is Excellent _____

Good _____

Nothing Special _____

Disappointing _____

Comments _____

FLLW's orchestration of space outdoors is _____ , is not _____ as successful as his architectural spa composition.

Comments _____

No evidence that FLLW or his office was responsible for site development, as visible today._____

OWNER-OCCUPANT INTERVIEW

NAME _____ **OF** _____ **RESIDENCE, #** _____

Others living here now?_____

PRE-TAPING . Are you arelated to the original FLLW client? _____ How long lived here? ____yrs.

. Approx. size of site _____ft x ____ ft_____ about _____acres.

. Do you have original plans? _____ Site plan? ___ Historical exterior photos ____

. Which outdoor construction features are not original? _____

. Which large trees/shrubs are not original? _____

. Has site been extensively redesigned/rebuilt/replanted? ____ Approx. date _____

. Do you know of any landscape architect(s) or garden designer(s) engaged in the past?

Approx. date_____ Name _____

Address _____ Phone(___)_____

. Shortest distance between house & public ROW _____ feet; side lot line _____ feet.

. Orientation. Largest glass areas face _____ Main views are to _____

. House-site "fit." Slipped into topo. _____ Sits on "waterline" base _____

Sits on masonry retaining base _____ Max. fill ht. _____

Conventional foundation._____ Other _____

Pre-Production: If possible, disconnect telephone; relocate dog; minimize A/C noise or other distractions. If two are attending interview, only one to speak at once. Difference of opinion OK. Unless otherwise stated, questions deal with outdoor site elements. If appropriate to make comparisons, compare existing situation with other places you have lived. (Attach and test "Lavalior" microphone.

VIDEO ON

1. When you selected this house, were you specifically looking for FLLW designed property?
2. What about this site most appealed to you?
3. After having lived here, has the site fulfilled your needs? How? Why? Why not?
4. What works and what doesn't work, in regard to the orientation of the house?
   (a) How is the sun screened in summer?
   (b) Is good sun access provided in winter?
   (c) Is there a means for storing this heat by a masonry or water mass? If so, how?
   (d) Do prevailing breezes work for you in summer? Blocked out in winter? If so, how?
   (e) Are you aware of energy conservation design features, such as overhangs and trees ?
   (f) To what extent does this work/not work?
5. To what extent are you aware of the indoor-outdoor relationship of house to site? To sky?
6. Are guests aware of this? If so, what kind of comments do you hear?
7. How does your family use the outoors?
8. How do casual visitors and house guests use the outdoors?
9. How well does access/circulation function for foot traffic? Any difference between use by family members vs guests?
10. How well does auto access/circulation/parking function for motor traffic? Any difference between use by family members vs guests?

11. What design provisions were made for deliveries/trash pickup/other service-utilites?
12. Do you have adequate privacy from the public street and sidewalk?
13. Do you have adequate privacy from neighboring properties?
14. Do you have (or need) space for quiet relaxation and contemplation? Explain.
15. Do your children/grandchildren have adequate space for recreation/outdoor play?
16. For your particular lifestyle, does your site provide for your needs for the following:
    (a) family gatherings
    (b) outdoor meals
    (c) garden parties
    (d) gardening and other leisure activities
17. Are there are drainage problems after heavy rains/snow?
18. How did the design incorporate off-site national features, if any?
19. What outdoor feature causes the most maintenance expense?
20. What do you consider the best features of your site design and development?
21. What do you consider the failures of your site design and development?
22. What is the greatest unsolved site problem, if any?
23. Can you think of any special creative achievements of children who grew up in this environment?
    (a) Did any become architects/artists/landscape architects/musicians/performing artists?
    (b) How, if in any way, do you believe the total environment played a part in this?
24. Please conclude with any comments you might have as follows:
    (a) related to the site
    (b) any stories or reminiscences of FLLW
    (c) any stories or reminiscences of his associates
    (d) any stories or reminiscences of former occupants of this property.

STILL PHOTOS Take B/W photos of interviewee(s) and few interior/exterior shots._____

Storrer #_____

Monograph #_____ pp _____

See also _____

_____

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT PROJECT RECORD

_____ Residence _____

Original Owner Date Designed / Date Built (Addition[s])

Current Owner(s) _____

Address _____ Type _____

_____ Telephone #_____

Unique Features of house _____

_____ Physical Appearance _____

Unique Features of Site _____

_____ Physical Appearance _____

Current condition of landscape plant materials _____

_____

Published references/dates_____

_____

_____

_____

Site & landscape design references_____

_____

_____

Historical site photos_____

Site plan located _____ Shows _____

Date(s) visited_____

Color photos_____ B/W_____ Slides_____ 8mm Video_____

Potential for broadcast video _____

Date(s) of Videography _____ By_____

Notes_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Continue on back of sheet, if more room is needed)

LIST OF HOMEOWNERS INTERVIEWED / SITES EVALUATED

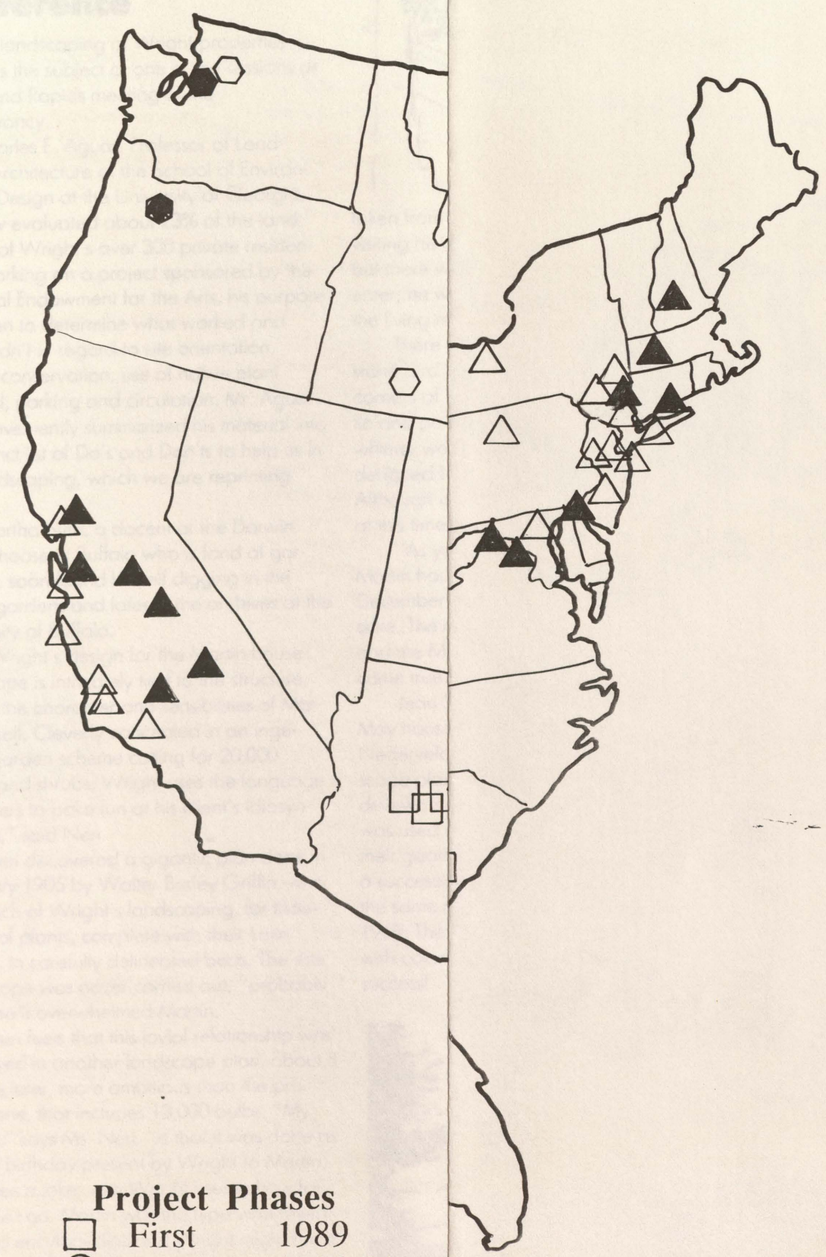
NAME IN BOLD = property still occupied by at least one member of First Family

- Video = 8mm Camcorder
- S = Still Photo Only
- E = Excellent
- G = Good
- P = Nothing Special, but has Potential

		INTERVIEW		SITE EVALUATION		
Storrer #	First Family	Video	Oral	Video	Ratings	City / State
11	McArthur		●	●	6.9 / P	Chicago, IL
14	Blossom		●	●	7.7 / G	Chicago, IL
34	Moore			●	5.9 / G	Oak Park, IL
51	Hills			●	5.9 / G	Oak Park, IL
54	Willits		●	●	3.5 / P	Highland Park, IL
55	Willits Stable/Res.			●	8.8 / G	Highland Park, IL
58	Fricke-Martin		●	●	6.6 / P	Oak Park, IL
61	W. E. Martin			●	5.1 / P	Oak Park, IL
67	Thomas	●		●	8.5 / P	Oak Park, IL
68	Davenport	●		●	6.3 / P	River Forest, IL
70	Little		●	S	8.6 / G	Peoria, IL
74	Heurtley			●	5.8 / P	Oak Park, IL
98	Mrs. T. Gale	●		●	8.8 / E	Oak Park, IL
99	Westcott		●	●	7.3 / P	Springfield, OH
104	Cheney		●	●	8.1 / P	Oak Park, IL
108	Adams	●		●	7.7 / P	Oak Park, IL
109	Glasner			●	9.5 / E	Glencoe, IL
110	Brown			●	2.9 / P	Evanston, IL
115	Hardy			●	8.6 / G	Racine, WI
117	Beachy			●	9.4 / G	Oak Park, IL
126	Millard			●	9.4 / G	Highland Park, Il
128	Tomek	●		●	9.8 / E	Riverside, IL
135	Coonley-Main Hse			●	9.6 / E	Riverside, IL
137	Coonley-Coach Hse	●		●	9.6 / E	Riverside, IL
138	Hunt	●		●	6.0 / P	LaGrange, IL
150	I. Roberts	●		●	8.2 / G	River Forest, IL
151	Baker	●		●	7.1 / P	Wilmette, IL
158	Copeland			●	4.1 / P	Oak Park, IL
161	Ingalls	●		●	10.0 / E	River Forest IL
174	Coonley Playhouse		●	●	4.1 / P	Riverside, IL

179	Adams	●		●	6.4 / P	Oak Park, IL
184	Brigham		●	●	6.8 / P	Glencoe, IL
188	Perry			●	9.6 / G	Glencoe, IL
189	Root			●	9.2 / G	Glencoe, IL
190	Kier			●	5.8 / P	Glencoe, IL
191	Ross			●	3.8 / P	Glencoe, IL
192	Kissam			●	6.5 / P	Glencoe, Il
193	Back			●	5.6 / P	Chicago, IL
197	Vosburgh			●	2.1 / P	Grand Beach, MI
198	Bagley			●	1.5 / P	Grand Beach, MI
199	Carr			●	4.0 / P	Grand Beach, MI
203.2	Richards Pre-Cut			●	9.5 / E	Wilmette, IL
204.2	Richards Pre-Cut			●	2.5 / P	Wilmette, Il
204.4	Meier			S	1.2 / P	Monona, IA
260	Armstrong		●	●	7.9 / G	Ogden Dunes, IN
261	Stevens			●	9.6 / E	Yemassee, SC
267	**Rosenbaum**	●		●	9.0 / E	Florence, AL
269	Goetsh-Winckler		●	●	10.0 / E	Okemos, MI
287	**Smith**		●	●	10.0 / E	Bloomfield Hills,MI
289	Miller			●	9.0 / E	Charles City, IA
294	**Weisblat**	●		●	9.7 / E	Galesburg, MI
295	Pratt		●	●	10.0 / E	Galesburg, MI
296	Eppstein	●		●	8.5 / G	Galesburg, MI
297	Meyer	●		●	9.8 / E	Galesburg, MI
298	Levin	●		●	2.6 / P	Kalamazoo, MI
299	McCartney		●	●	9.8 / E	Kalamazoo, MI
300	Brown		●	●	8.6 / G	Kalamazoo, MI
301	Winn			●	8.9 / G	Kalamazoo, MI
312	**Brauner**		●	●	9.7 / E	Okemos, MI
313	Edwards			S	9.7 / E	Okemos, MI
314	Neils			S	9.2 / E	Minneapolis, MN
319	**Laurent**			S	8.4 / G	Rockford, IL
326	Carlson		●	●	10.0 / E	Phoenix, AZ
328	Schaberg	●		●	5.3 / P	Okemos, MI
332	**Palmer**		●	●	9.8 / E	Ann Arbor, MI

341	Glore	●		●	6.3 / G	Lake Forest, IL
344	Adelman		●	●	9.8 / E	Phoenix, AZ
345	Austin		●	●	9.5 / E	Greenville, SC
361	Boomer		●	●	5.5 / P	Phoenix, AZ
364	Goddard				2.9 / p	Plymouth, MI
388	Turkel			●	6.6 / G	Detroit, MI

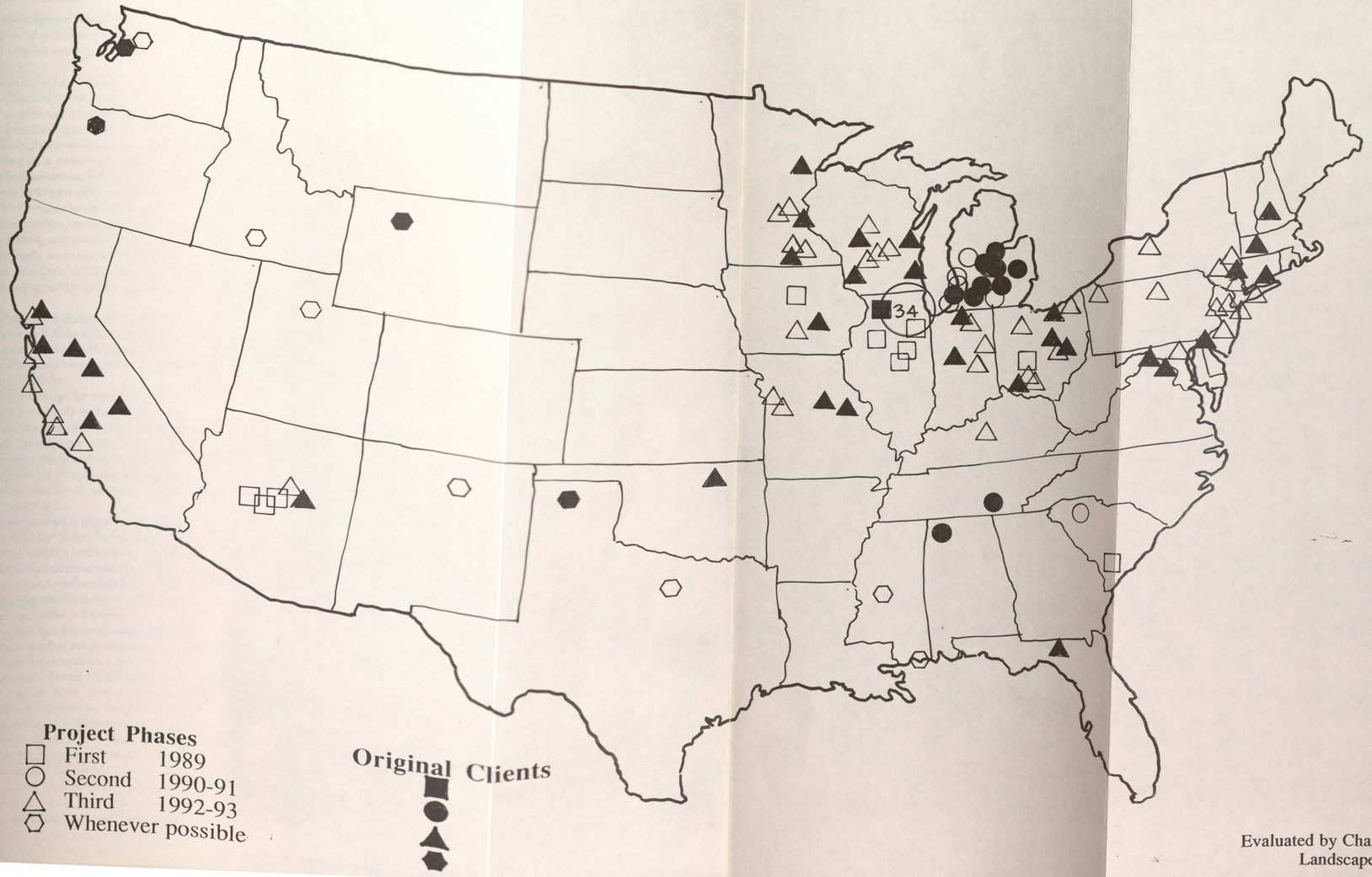


Project Phases

- □ First 1989
- ○ Second 1990-91
- △ Third 1992-93
- ▲ Whenever possible

Evaluated by Charles Aguar

Occupied Residences Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright



Evaluated by Charles Aguar
Landscape Architect

Wright Landscaping Presented at Conference

The landscaping of Wright properties was the subject of one of the sessions at the Grand Rapids meeting of the Conservancy.

Charles E. Aguar, Professor of Landscape Architecture at the School of Environmental Design at the University of Georgia, has now evaluated about 23% of the landscapes of Wright's over 300 private residences. Working on a project sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, his purpose has been to determine what worked and what didn't in regard to site orientation, energy conservation, use of native plant material, parking and circulation. Mr. Aguar has conveniently summarized his material into a succinct list of Do's and Don'ts to help us in our landscaping, which we are reprinting here.

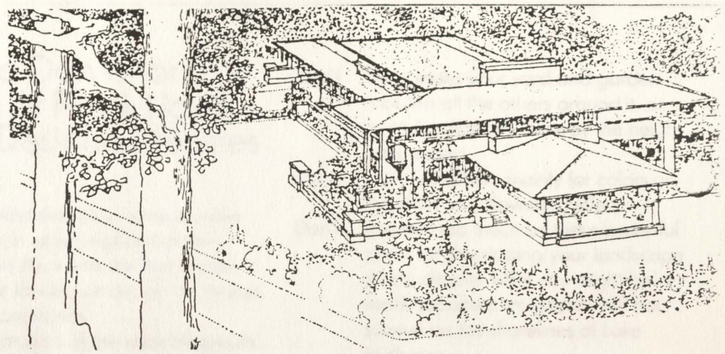
Martha Neri, a docent at the Darwin Martin house in Buffalo who is fond of gardening, soon found herself digging in the house gardens and later in the archives at the University of Buffalo.

"Wright's design for the Martin house landscape is intricately tied to the structure, and to the character and sensibilities of Martin himself. Cleverly concealed in an ingenious garden scheme calling for 20,000 plants and shrubs, Wright uses the language of flowers to poke fun at his client's idiosyncracies," said Neri.

Neri discovered a gigantic plan done in February 1905 by Walter Burley Griffin, who did much of Wright's landscaping, for thousands of plants, complete with their Latin names, in carefully delineated beds. The size and scope was never carried out; "probably because it overwhelmed Martin."

Neri feels that this jovial relationship was displayed in another landscape plan, about 8 months later, more ambitious than the previous one, that includes 13,000 bulbs. "My theory," says Ms. Neri, "is that it was done as a 40th birthday present by Wright to Martin, and was a joke, with Wright seeing how far he could go. Martin was the type who loved to read encylopedias and Wright might have goaded him with this spoof."

Called the Floricycle Plan, it consisted of ten concentric bands, rigidly constructed and symmetrical. It had an arched dentil motif taken from an entry in Martin's diary about visiting his dentist. The plan made a 157' arc but there was no space for a gardener to enter; he would have had to come through the living room!



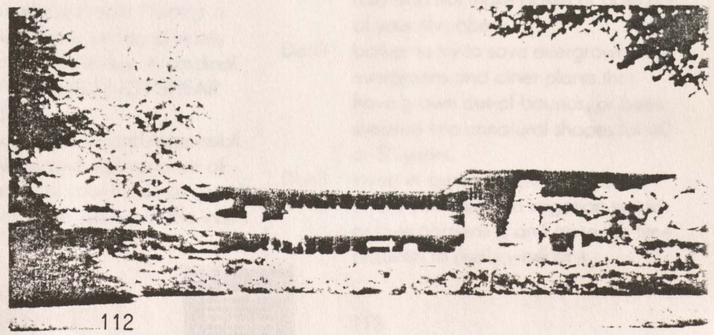
The Wasmuth drawing of the Martin house shows the semi-circular garden surrounding the porch, which combines what Martin did—extending the garden about 80%—with what Wright wanted.

There were other jokes, too, such as the stone bird houses perched atop the four corners of the conservatory for "Darwin Martin and purple martins." Another piece of whimsy was the 800 pound aquarium designed to hang in the conservatory. Although aquariums were immensely popular at this time, Martin decided not to build it.

"As you may know," writes Neri, "the Martin house has been closed since December, 1990, and there is no reopening date. The restoration of both the Dana house and the Meyer May houses are fairy tales come true."

Jean Smith, a volunteer at the Meyer May house related how she and David Nederveld brought back the original landscape plan, retrieving the garden from the driveways and paving of the 1940's when it was used as apartments. They have fulfilled their goals: to install a sprinkling system; plan a succession of blooming plants; and restore the same perennials that were growing in 1910. The sumptuous garden, overflowing with colorful variety, is a testament to their success!

The Martin house about 1926, almost totally hidden by vines and shrubbery, with the water table completely hidden.



Do's and Don'ts for Owners of Frank Lloyd Wright Designed Homes

Note: Since landscape construction, grading, and other site specific conditions vary widely, the following will address materials which can be discussed in a general way for many styles of Wright architecture.

Do keep in mind that your home is unlike any other in your neighborhood—perhaps in the world, for that matter.

Do build your landscape design on shapes, textures, and forms.

Do realize that most of the early Wasmuth drawings and Miriam Mahoney's Japanese-like prints—beautiful as they are—are artistic and stylistic creations and were often entirely out-of-scale with reality.

Do plant trailing vines in the urns and planters to present the form and texture Wright intended.

Do expose the foundation of the home to emphasis where it meets the ground, even if you don't live in a Prarie-style home with a "water table."

Do maximize the use of native or indigenous vegetation as such trees and shrubs will require less care, less watering, and will always appropriately complement the organic architecture designed by Wright.

Do use perennials for color and for cutting as floral arrangements, as shown in historic drawings and photographs of Wright designed residences.

Do plant in ways that will follow and complement, rather than compete with, the architectural forms of your home.

Do expect that design and restoration costs may be higher for sites by Wright designed homes, due to the current shortage of skilled designers trained to interpret organic architecture.

Do learn the basics of retaining the natural form of plants. Invest in the purchase of a copy of *Guide to Proper Pruning*, a $6.95 book that can be found in any garden shop or bookstore. A cardinal rule is, "THOU SHALT NOT SHEAR THY SHRUBS."

Do give as much attention and responsibility to the setting and maintenance of exterior spaces of your house as you do the furnishings and upkeep of the interior.

Don't try to make your yard and garden look like all the others around it, or try to landscape "the way the neighbors expect."

Don't plant shrubbery mainly for colors or the short term flowering effect.

Don't depend too much on these beautiful prints for developing your landscape plans, despite what you might have read. Japanese magnolias will not survive on the shorelines of Lake Michigan.

Don't substitute upright plant forms or only geraniums in these urns and planters since they do *not* present the form and texture Wright intended.

Don't install foundation planting to make the house appear to "float in space," a Victorian age practice held in disdain by Mr. Wright.

Don't plant fussy exotics, such as Japanese maples, variegated varieties and showy flowering shrubby except in an intimate space and on the non-public side of your house.

Don't plant flowers as edging or in the usual sense of garden displays of public gardens and parks.

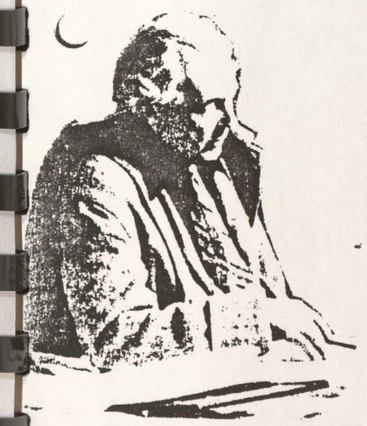
Don't expect *all* landscape architects and garden designers to have the interest and skills required to create a complementary planting plan for a Wright house.

Don't count on saving money with a landscape designer who is learning at your expense, any more than you would with someone inadequately trained to repair art glass, restore furniture, or fix the leaky roof.

Don't employ or retain a yard maintenance person who only knows how to *shear* plantings. Insist that your maintenance person learn to prune naturally and not make boxes or balls out of your shrubbery.

Don't bother to try to save overgrown evergreens and other plants that have grown out-of-bounds, or been sheared into unnatural shapes for 40 or 50 years.

Don't invest in expensive plant materials unless you install an irrigation system or love gardening and have the time required to really work at it.



Comments and constructive criticism are welcome.

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