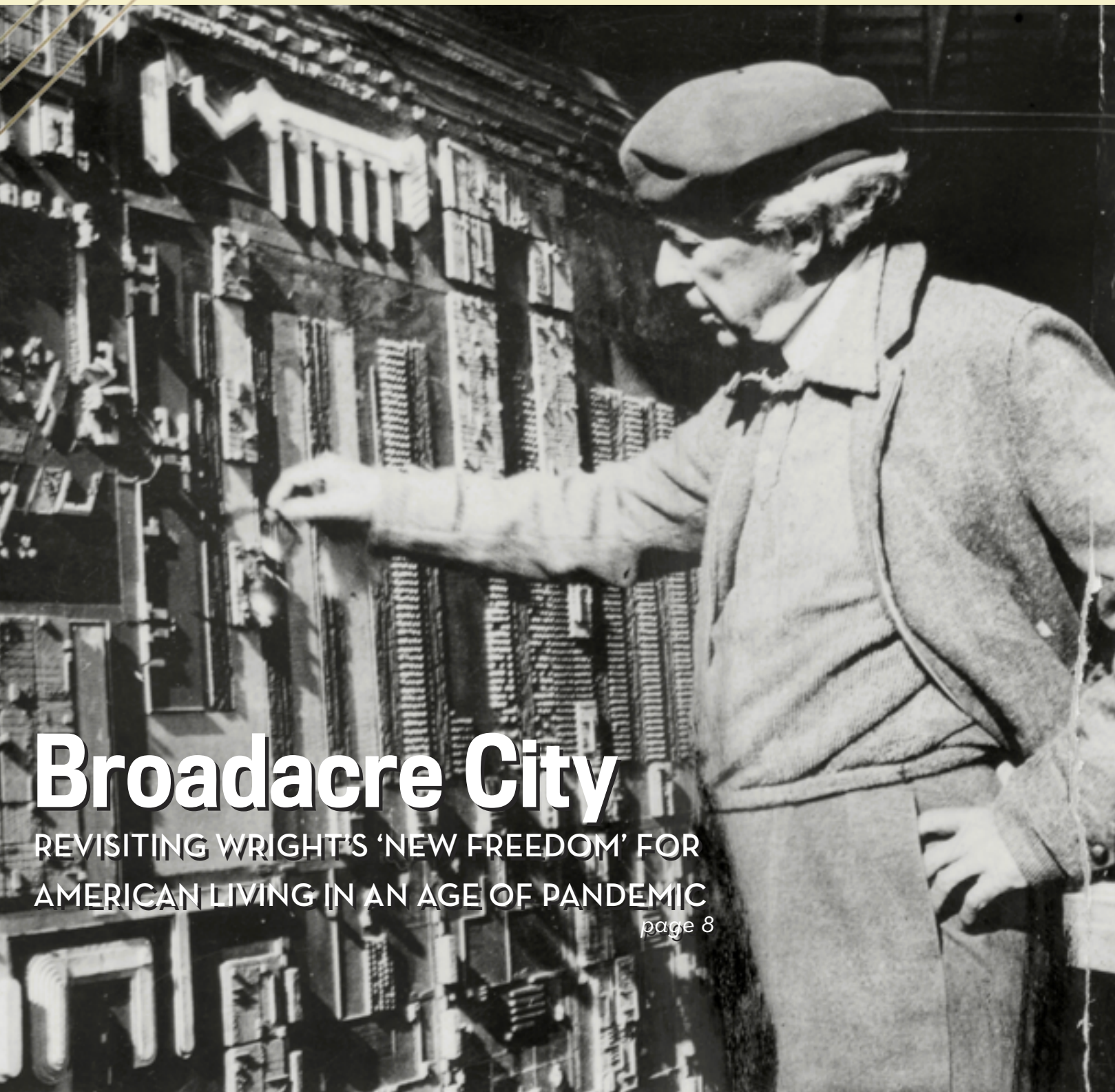


WRIGHT IN WISCONSIN

MEMBER NEWSLETTER \ CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT



Broadacre City

REVISITING WRIGHT'S 'NEW FREEDOM' FOR
AMERICAN LIVING IN AN AGE OF PANDEMIC

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Frank Lloyd Wright Visitor
Center joins historic register

News & Notes from Wright in Wisconsin

Tours Resume at A.D. German Warehouse, Richland Center

The A.D. German Warehouse Conservancy board of directors has decided to resume tours on the last Sunday of the month, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Private tours are available by appointment only.

The cost is \$15/person. No more than five people at a time may attend a tour.

Masks are required, and social distancing will be maintained at all times.

Wright in Wisconsin to Launch Quarterly Member Book Group

Wright in Wisconsin will host its first member book group from 1 to 2 p.m. on Oct. 25, 2020. The book we'll read for this inaugural session is: "Plagued by Fire: The Dreams and Furies of Frank Lloyd Wright" by Paul Hendrickson. The author is slated to attend the event and participate in the discussion.

Registration information is available at wrightinwisconsin.org. Attendance is limited to 15 members.

Phase 2 of Wright Virtual Visits Features Badger State Properties

Three Wisconsin sites designed by Frank Lloyd Wright have so far participated in Phase 2 of the Wright Virtual Visits project led by the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy and Unity Temple Restoration Foundation. The live video collaborations involving Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center, Burnham Block and Taliesin are available at savewright.org.

President's Message

by GEORGE HALL



Here we are, with the pandemic still with us for the foreseeable future, with some Wright- and apprentice-designed homes having exterior and limited interior tours and others deferring tours until this fall, or later. Meanwhile, everyone is doing more online.

So far, Wright in Wisconsin has co-sponsored additional virtual lectures hosted by Heather Sabin at Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center, with an early summer lecture featuring former board member Mark Hertzberg sharing his book on the history of Penwern, the Fred B. Jones estate on Delavan Lake near Lake Geneva. The most recent event was presented on August 22 by board member Ken Dahlin: "The Misunderstood Wright: Modernism and Traditionalism."

If you missed these lectures, you can find them online at: <https://tinyurl.com/2020wds>.

A future presentation, involving architects with homeowners who are either preserving or "doing Wright" and in collaboration with the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy, is currently under discussion.

All lectures are worth watching. If you want to understand what Wright is saying when he speaks about breaking the box, abstraction and beauty, listen to Dahlin's presentation, in which he demystifies Wright's 19th century mindset and vocabulary as applied to his 20th century architecture.

Wright in Wisconsin Member Surveys

Your responses to our recently mailed questionnaire are appreciated, illuminating and energizing. I only wish the response rate was greater — approximately 25 percent as of early September. I appreciate your handwritten notes and commentary as I chart your responses.

To those of you who replied (and to you who also contributed financially), thank you. Your continued faith in Wright in Wisconsin is very much appreciated. Answers to

questions will help shape our future planning and, in addition, tell us where we need to improve.

To those who haven't returned the questionnaire, completing it can't be that painful! If you still have your questionnaire, please try answering the questions that matter to you and send it back — or create a pdf and email it to us as soon as you can.

If you need another questionnaire, please email the office. Bill Swan, our office administrator, and I are beginning to work on returning membership cards and, for members who joined at the Donor level (\$100/year) or higher, including reciprocal sites information.

Most of you are long-time members who endured the transition in 2017 with us. Your continued support is very much appreciated.

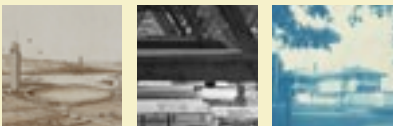
While a statistical sifting and winnowing of the returned questionnaires awaits until we achieve a critical sample size, some impressions can be shared:

- Everyone likes our Wright and Like tour, putting it as No. 1 (despite being buried in the list of activities you were asked to rank).
- Our newsletter came in at No. 2.
- As for the current website, there was not so much enthusiasm. To that end, we are making plans to redesign it and hope to unveil a more robust website by late spring next year, in time to aid in producing Wright and Like 2021, which we hope to be able to produce in the wake of the pandemic.

Your appreciation of Wright and Like and this newsletter is heartening, as these two activities are where we direct most of our resources, along with maintaining an office and core business functions.

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WRIGHT IN WISCONSIN VOLUME 25 \ ISSUE 3

WRIGHT IN WISCONSIN is published three times annually by Wright in Wisconsin, a nonprofit organization designed to promote, protect and preserve the heritage of Frank Lloyd Wright, his vision and his architecture — as well as the work of his apprentices, Taliesin Associated Architects and like-minded architects — in his native state of Wisconsin. Membership benefits include discounts at the Monona Terrace Gift Shop and on Wright and Like™ tour tickets, this newsletter, volunteer opportunities and more. Donors of \$100 or more receive reciprocal membership benefits at Wright sites nationwide (benefits vary by location). To join, visit us at www.wrightinwisconsin.org or contact us at the number or address below.

Wright in Wisconsin Member Newsletter

Editor and designer Brian R. Hannan

Special thanks to: Patrick J. Mahoney for providing the vintage postcard; and to Robert Hartmann for designing the Wright in Wisconsin logo and sharing his vintage pictures.

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LEFT: Detail, Broadacre City model, Milwaukee Art Museum, "Organic Architecture for the 21st Century," May 2011. ON THE COVER: Frank Lloyd Wright with the Broadacre City model in January 1935. For this image and, unless otherwise noted, images published with the Broadacre City article: © 2020 Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Scottsdale, Arizona. The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives (The Museum of Modern Art | Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York).

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 03

So Long, Mark Hertzberg

This board has undergone many transitions over the decades as we’ve faced various challenges. Several longtime board members and I have weathered the most recent changes: We were happy to welcome new members Brian R. Hannan and Curt Szymczak this past winter.

Now I regret to say that Mark Hertzberg decided to step down this past July. Mark has been our faithful board secretary for as long as I can remember, as well as our newsletter editor and general prompter and conscience for all things Wright.

While we will miss him, his departure reminds us that serving on the board does not require a life-time commitment. Transitions naturally occur and should be anticipated.

We are still looking for a few board members with particular skill sets such as nonprofit law and historic preservation, as well as seeking to diversify our current board. As volunteer board members, we are limited in what we can do individually, without board membership becoming a full-time endeavor. As that Wisconsin farmer, author and raconteur Michael Perry says: “It’s totally up to you.”

Do feel free to reach out to us. Stay safe as we endure and await a solution to this global pandemic.



Mark Hertzberg stepped down from the board this summer.



Still Bend Summer

Projects Help to Advance Wright’s Usonian Vision

by BRIAN R. HANNAN

Some people who own Frank Lloyd Wright-designed homes restore them as they were built. Others, like Michael Ditmer, help them become what they were meant to be.

“That’s my charge as steward of the house. I intend to leave this house being the shining example of what Frank Lloyd Wright intended,” said Ditmer, who co-owns the Bernard and Fern Schwartz House (1939), which Wright named Still Bend, with his brother, Gary.

“I will stand firmly in the corner of Wright,” Ditmer added. “I believe, if he were to come back to life and visit the house, he would be thrilled that it’s actually, finally emerging as the house he envisioned — and probably would say something like, ‘What took you so long?’”

The case in point is the sunken court that is accessible from the master bedroom and, via the French doors Ditmer expects to restore next spring, the living area. Wright specified privacy walls and built-in benches the Schwartzes had not completed when construction ended in the spring of 1940 — likely because the builder had run out of the required red tidewater cypress.



Michael Ditmer, co-owner of Still Bend (1939), continues the work of restoring the Two Rivers residence and completing Frank Lloyd Wright’s vision for the home.

Ditmer completed the work this summer so the house would be ready for its closeup. A “major television network” was interested in profiling the house for a segment that is slated to air in the near future.

Seeing the privacy walls and banquette seating installed is “exhilarating,” Ditmer said, noting Wright left his clients with “finer details to finish the sunken court the way he wanted” after a visit to the home in 1941.

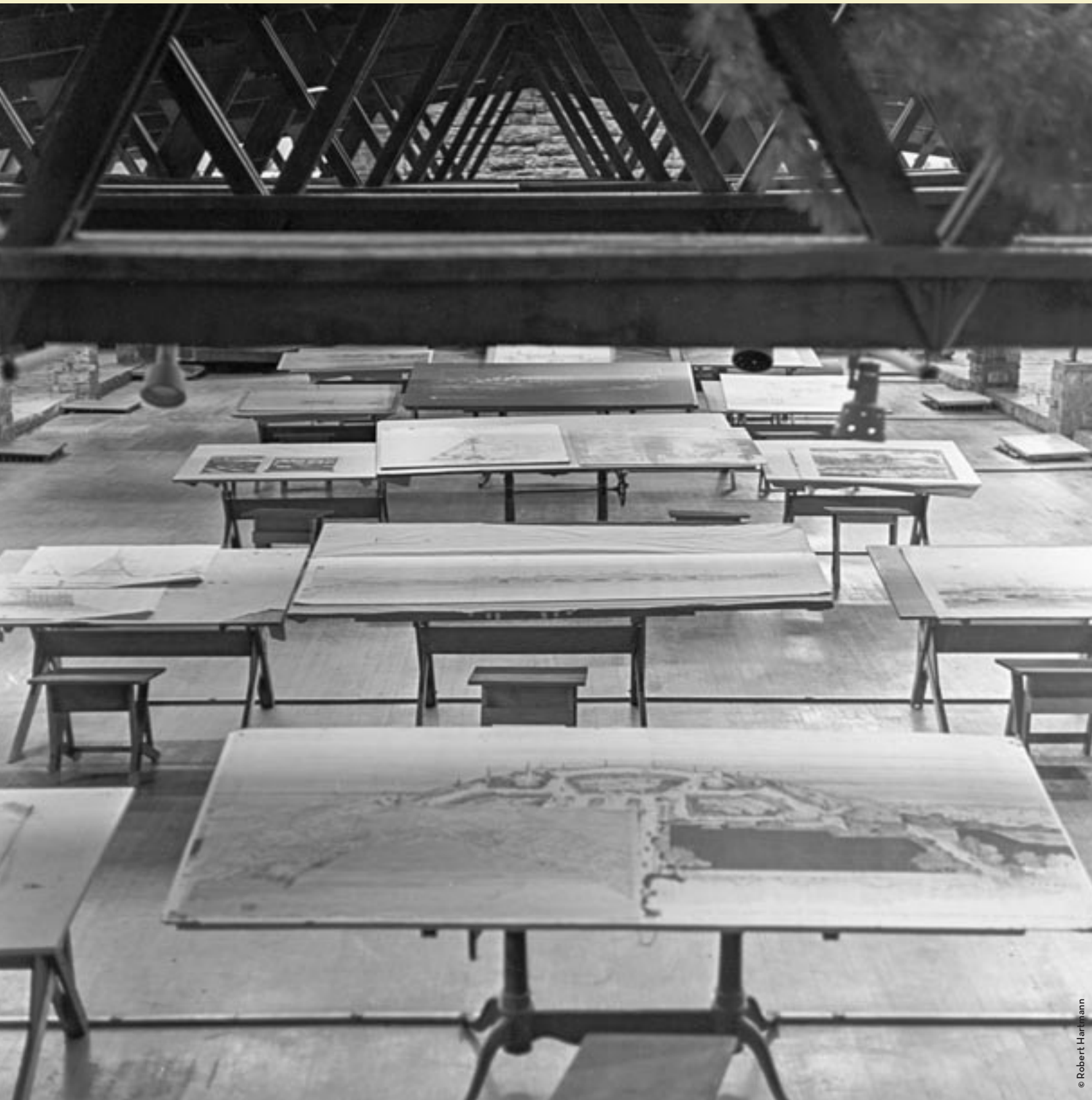
“This has been a long time coming,” Ditmer said.

Other projects also were completed this summer, including staining the riverside terrace concrete to match the Cherokee Red tinting in the sunken court. When a previous owner replaced the terrace’s original concrete in the 1970s, it was left plain.

Ditmer also repaired damaged wood cut-outs in the home’s clerestory windows and restored the finish on the banquette seating in the lounge and the built-in desks in both the lounge and the entry. Looking ahead he plans to build a cushion cabinet Wright specified for the sunken court and clean and restore the original concrete.



Editor’s Note: More information about Still Bend and how to book an overnight stay is available at: theschwartzhouse.com. Tours of the home have been temporarily halted because of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Above: A view of the Hillside drafting room (circa 1967) through the trusses shows drafting tables (center front and center middle) with large presentation renderings of the Monona Terrace project.

Right: A scale model of Monona Terrace (circa 1967), possibly a revised version of the 1955 model, is dominated by a dramatic photo of the recently completed Guggenheim Museum in New York.

Vintage Photos

Visit to the Hillside Drafting Room Finds Wright Successors Busy with Monona Terrace Project

by ROBERT HARTMANN

No other drafting room in the world looks like the drafting room that Frank Lloyd Wright created in 1932 at Hillside. Upon completion, it became an integral part of life at Taliesin for Wright and his apprentices. Multiple timber trusses, interlaced with triangular uprights of wood, give the space the character of an abstract forest.

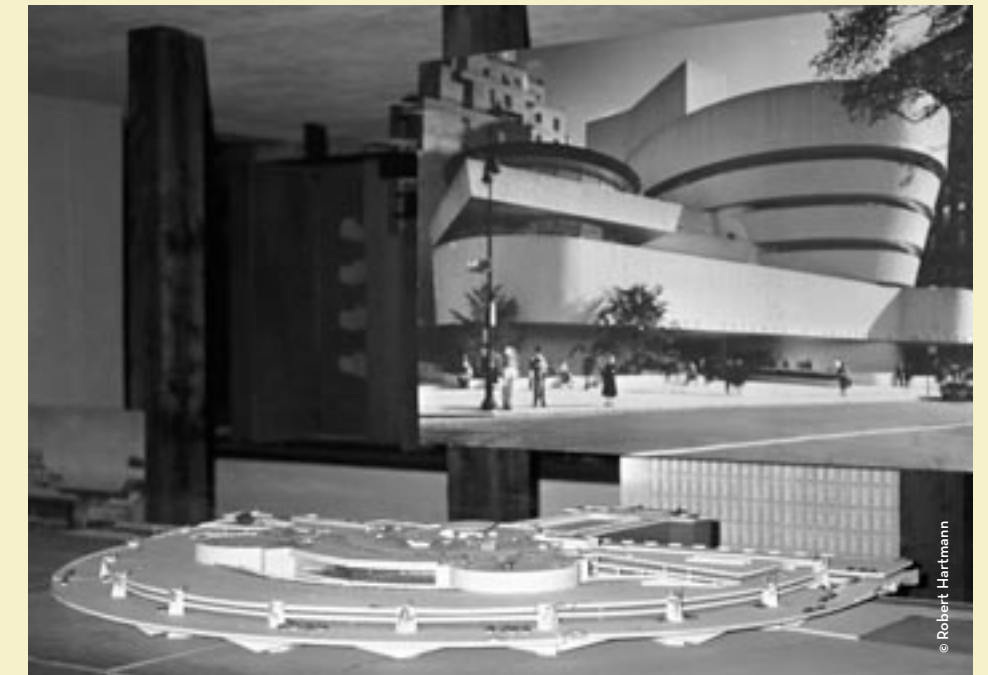
In the early 1930s, the Depression and a lack of sustaining commissions forced Wright, who was nearing 65, to re-invent himself. Wright and his wife, Olgivanna, came up with the idea of forming a school of architecture.

The school would consist of student apprentices who would study under the master and stress “a learn-by-doing philosophy.” William Wesley Peters, Edgar Tafel and John Howe were among the early students to show up at Wright’s doorstep.

The drafting room would be a learning center and home for an ever-increasing number of apprentices throughout Wright’s lifetime.

Six years later, in 1938, Wright would again create an equally stunning but very different drafting room for his apprentices. This time, it would be located at Taliesin West in Scottsdale, Arizona.

As I walked through the drafting room and Hillside in the fall of 1967, just eight years after Wright’s death, when these photos were taken, drawings and architectural models were everywhere in sight. The Monona Terrace project for Madison (1938) was back on the drawing boards, al-



though this time, Peters, now chief architect of Taliesin Associated Architects, was in charge of preparing the grandest of all schemes for Monona Terrace.

It was called the Monona Basin Plan.

After preparing a comprehensive master plan and completing bid drawings for a first-phase civic auditorium, the scheme was not to be. There always seemed to be two constants when it came to building Monona Terrace: embittered opponents; and never enough money.

Madison would have to wait until 1997 for the Monona Terrace convention center to finally be constructed.

Apprentice Tony Putnam served as principal-in-charge and design architect for the project. Authors David V. Mollenhoff and Mary Jane Hamilton,

in their publication “Frank Lloyd Wright’s Monona Terrace: The Enduring Power of a Civic Vision,” point out that, as a young apprentice, Putnam’s first assignment was to work on an elaborate scale model of Monona Terrace when he first arrived at Taliesin in the mid-1950s.

2020 marks the end of an era. For the first time in 88 years, architecture students will not be occupying either Wright’s famed drafting rooms at Taliesin or Taliesin West. Instead, due to an unresolved conflict between the School of Architecture at Taliesin and the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, the school will be moving to Paolo Soleri’s Cosanti and Arcosanti locations near Phoenix.

Soleri spent a brief period of time with Wright as an apprentice in the 1940s.

Broadacre City

Revisiting Wright's Vision of a 'New Freedom' for American Living in an Age of Global Pandemic

by BRIAN R. HANNAN

When Frank Lloyd Wright introduced Broadacre City to readers of “The New York Times Magazine” in March 1932, the United States was in the grips of the Great Depression and on the cusp of the Dust Bowl. As the concept evolved and the apprentices built a promotional model, he promised it would bring a “new freedom for living in America.”

“The Broadacre City is not merely the only democratic city,” Wright wrote. “It is the only possible city, looking toward the future.”

Nearly nine decades later, Broadacre City remains both a curiosity in the architect's portfolio and a challenge. As we work to stop the spread of COVID-19 and shore up the economy, was Wright right? Could his utopian vision help to advance our own search for national and personal renewal in the postmodern era?

“It’s almost uncanny how perfect it would be in the current moment,” said Jennifer Gray, curator of drawings and archives at Columbia University’s Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library. “The pandemic has given people a chance to re-evaluate” how, even in the best of times, they’re forced to juggle competing professional obligations and personal commitments. “People are waking up to that, and they realize they want to reset the balance.”

For Wright, Gray said, Broadacre City emerged as his response to overlapping concerns about the machine, densely populated cities — which he described as a “fibrous tumor” — and rising economic, political and social



Above: An early ink-and-paper rendering of Broadacre City drawn by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Right: The main Broadacre City model on display at the Milwaukee Art Museum for a 2011 exhibition

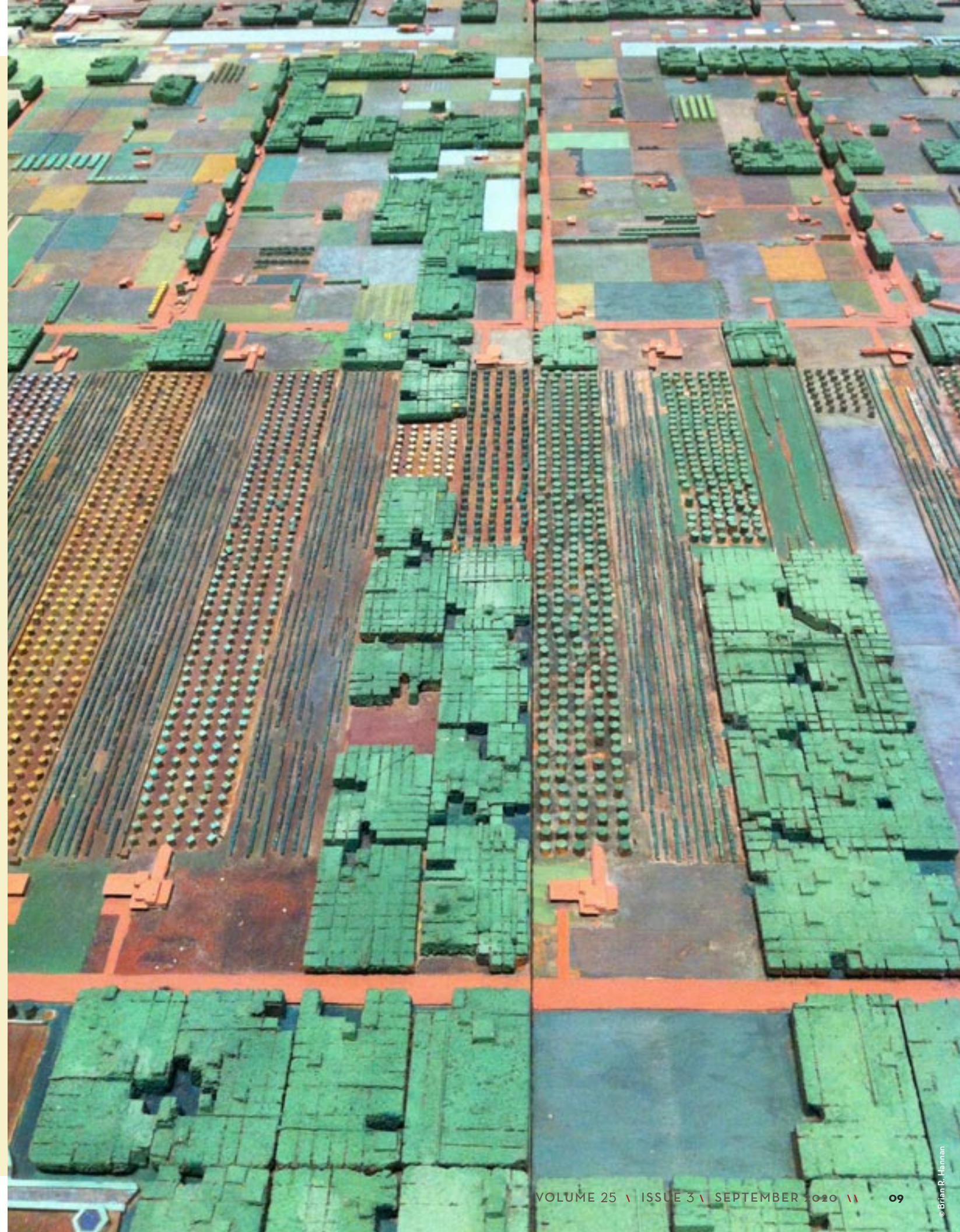
inequalities. She contends he conceived Broadacre City as a thought experiment rather than as a literal blueprint: How can the United States ease the urban-rural divide, reconnect citizens with nature and foster a renewed sense of autonomy and self-reliance?

In other words, “more agency,” Gray said. “They’re not dependent on

the government or their boss or whatever else. I think that's the whole idea."

Home and land ownership emerged as the common denominator for Wright, who would assign each “Usonia” household a thoughtfully designed house atop a minimum of one

BROADACRE CITY CONTINUES ON PAGE 12





WRIGHT THOUGHTS

by KEN DAHLIN, AIA

Authentic Usonian Character

Natural Materials, Fine Proportion, a Sense of Space, Overall Unity

In the third part of this series on designing a Usonian home today, I will explore contemporary construction processes and how they affect building the house itself.

With the Usonian home, Frank Lloyd Wright went further than he did with his Prairie School homes in rethinking the entire building process and detailing. While the Prairie homes were truly distinctive in their esthetic character, and many technical innovations were incorporated into them, the Usonian home amounted to a complete system of construction that rethought all aspects of construction.

For example, Wright's sandwich board-and-batten exterior walls of three layers of pine (at Jacobs I due to budget) and cypress (at later homes) and two layers of building paper give a total wall thickness of 2 1/4", with no stud walls for vertical support and no cavity for insulation. While the wall is thin, elegant and efficient, as an exterior wall system today, it will not pass building code requirements.

This same approach was seen when he used different materials, such as concrete block, in the Usonian Automatics. These designs had a double-wythe-wall composition, but the later Usonians using only standard concrete block did not.

Today, to achieve the Usonian goal of using the same material inside and outside means having two separate walls/layers of block, brick or stone. If it is a wood wall (say cypress or cedar), an exterior and interior layer of the same reverse board-and-batten siding is applied over a structural and insulating stud wall core.

Today's industry standards require building a wood frame structural stud wall with insulation, for example, then applying a stone veneer exterior cladding, with accompanying sheathing, waterproofing, anchors and flashings, and a separate



The board-and-batten walls at Jacobs I, Madison, consist of 3 layers of pine wood and 2 layers of building paper.

stone interior cladding.

None of the stone or brick is structural. Insulation is placed in the stud wall cavity and sometimes also between the wall and stone exterior veneer. All of these technical requirements make building a Usonian exterior wall more expensive than 80 years ago.

Wright's goal for the Usonian home was to reduce field labor as much as possible



by prefabricating as many components as possible offsite. Likewise, builders today rely on a supply chain of distributors and prefabricated items to make their job more efficient.

Gang-nail wood roof trusses are a prime example of a product that is both highly customizable and prefabricated. Windows, doors and cabinetry have gone from being locally produced and custom-made to being produced in a brand-name factory and shipped to a construction site that often is hundreds of miles away.

While this change may seem to be a positive fulfillment of Wright's concept, it has its problems. Design has a pernicious particularity about it that often conflicts with generalizing principles. The point here is that Wright's custom-designed window, door and millwork details had an elegance and grace about them that makes standard windows and doors seem bulky and crude by comparison.

When you look at the long bank of elegant and thin French doors off of a Usonian living room, today's standard doors and windows simply do not achieve this proportion and detailing. And so, today, we often are back to doing custom millwork details to achieve this effect.

Radiant heat installation at Ken Dahlin's Uecker House near Port Washington

And while items these could be prefabricated, often they are not because there is not enough repetition to achieve an economy of scale, just as in Wright's day. Much of what is done today also is done for low-maintenance desires. This further compromises Wright's concept of the authenticity of natural materials — real-wood windows and siding.

One area where today's technology works with Wright is the slab-on-grade concrete floor with a scored grid and radiant heating. This trademark of the Usonian home is very viable today but will require some close attention and coordination with the concrete contractor, rough carpentry trades and finish trades. This generally assumes you will forego the basement as Wright had proposed, although there are ways to put basements, garages and such underneath the concrete slab by using precast concrete planks, for example.

Radiant heating is much more efficient and reliable these days with the polybutylene tubing in the slab and no joints to leak inside the concrete. Generally, 2 inches of rigid

WRIGHT THOUGHTS CONTINUES ON PAGE 13

BROADACRE CITY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 08

acre — more for farms or families with children. Removing the distinction between landlords and tenants, while providing people with the means of growing their own food and selling the excess for profit, would eliminate much of the inequality he saw and bolster democracy. Humane use of the machine would ensure societal needs were met while reducing the hours people worked. With more time, they could enjoy leisure, exercise, the arts and community and social activities.

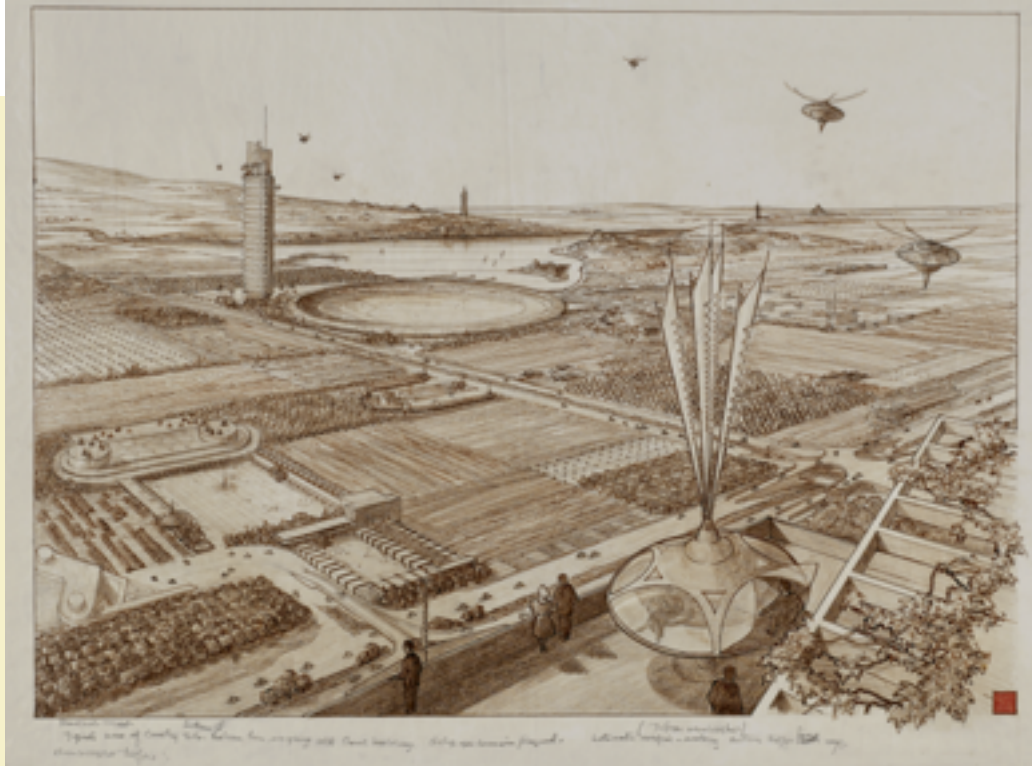
At four square miles, each self-contained-and-interconnected Broadacre City minimized commutes, reducing stress and congestion. Many workers could use the telephone to perform their duties at home, and radio would keep citizens informed.

“All common interests take place in a simple coordination wherein all are employed: little farms, little homes for industry, little factories, little schools, a little university..., little laboratories...,” Wright wrote. “Economic independence would be near, a subsistence certain; life varied and interesting.”

In the context of the COVID-19 outbreak, quarantining in place would be easier, and people need not fear eviction. Less density, when paired with social distancing, could translate into lower spread.

The downside? “You wouldn’t actually be able to do it,” Gray said, citing massive redistribution of wealth, prohibitive cost and wholesale restructuring. “It’s more about thinking through different ways of living and different ways of being in a community.

“So even if the solution is not Broadacre City, we can at least make



Later iterations of the Broadacre City concept (1958) imagined people traveling by means of helicopter-styled taxis.

improvements on things like education, local government, environmental sustainability, class disparity and gender and racial inequality,” she added. “I think it’s a way to think through these problems, and maybe we arrive at solutions that are more practical.”

The changes Wright envisioned with Broadacre City, occasionally reflecting his inclinations and idiosyncrasies — a car in every carport and not a power line in sight — were sweeping. Even he conceded in a 1935 article for “Architectural Record” that “(t)here are too many details involved in the model of Broadacres to permit complete explanation. Study of the model is necessary study.”

Indeed, Wright would spend the rest of his life tinkering with Broadacre City and tweaking its central concepts. He filled three books and several articles with his musings and continually wove new architectural projects into the plywood tapestry: Beth Sholom Synagogue, The Illinois, the Marin County Civic Center, Price Tower and various Usonian homes, among others.

The Broadacre City model last visited the Badger State in 2011 as part of an exhibit at the Milwaukee Art Museum: “Frank Lloyd Wright: Organic Architec-

ture for the 21st Century.” At the time, the late Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, then archives director at the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, told a reporter: “It seems like a good time to remind people that there was a good way in which architecture helped people live better and live in harmony not only with themselves but the planet they are living on.”

Gray agrees, phrasing in the present tense the renewed optimism she sees amid architects and the progress they can facilitate through coordinated, grassroots action — if not the top-down mandate of a Broadacre City. “We can change the society we live in,” she said. “We don’t have to take the status quo.”

For Further Reading

- “Broadacre City: An Architect’s Vision,” “The New York Times Sunday Magazine,” March 20, 1932
- “The Disappearing City,” Frank Lloyd Wright, William Farquhar Payson, 1935
- “Broadacre City: A New Community Plan,” “Architectural Record,” 1935
- “When Democracy Builds,” Frank Lloyd Wright, University of Chicago Press, 1945
- “The Living City,” Frank Lloyd Wright, Horizon Press, 1958

WRIGHT THOUGHTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

insulation is placed under the slab to insulate it and to distribute the heat where it belongs.

Perimeter insulation and frost walls are more complicated to detail today to eliminate thermal bridging points and heat loss. While the slab-on-grade method is still unusual for many home builders, it is fairly common among commercial builders who are used to coordinating plumbing and heating under the slab.

With a finished concrete floor, consideration needs to be given to protecting the slab during construction — whether from dropped tools that could chip the concrete or spilled acetone that could stain the surface, for example. Protection must be laid down on the slab during construction. Sometimes a two-pour slab is done for this very purpose.

Concrete finishing presents many more options than Wright had available in his day. Generally, the simpler the effect the better.

The Cherokee Red finish is very attainable now, and there are several ways to achieve this look such as integral color concrete, stained concrete, shake hardeners and colored sealers. Today’s popular stamped concrete, however, as a fake material, would not be true to the nature of the material in organic architecture.

Usonian also are known for flat roofs or low-slung elegant pitched roofs with vaulted ceilings inside when sloped. Most often, this means that standard trusses with their extra depth are not an option. Scissor trusses are almost always too clumsy and bulky.

However, thin-roof structures present a challenge for insulation. While these roofs most often will be stick-built, there are new options available to make these roofs strong and elegant.

Besides the use of steel, which Wright often hid in these structures, many types of engineered lumber, such as microlam beams, are available and often can provide strong and straight framing without the need for steel.

The insulation best suited to these thin-roof structures is spray foam, which does not require venting, has a higher R-value per inch and yields a more airtight enclosure. Structured insulated panels, which sandwich rigid insulation between two layers of plywood or oriented strand board, are another way to build roofs and walls in certain circumstances. Fortunately, we have more options to waterproof a flat roof than Wright had in his day, from ethylene propylene diene monomer rubber to spray-on thermoplastic polyolefin and PVC roof coverings with



Polybutylene tubing improves the efficiency and reliability of radiant heating.

20-year-plus warrantys.

In regard to heating and air conditioning, technology has progressed greatly since the 1950s, and many highly efficient heating and cooling systems are available, including geothermal systems. Heating a Usonian home with radiant systems is easier than cooling it with central air conditioning, which most Usonians did not have.

Cooling must be carefully integrated into the flat-roofed Usonian because little to no space is available for duct trunks to traverse the length of the home, and cooling vents are best placed up high rather than in the floor. While high-velocity air conditioning is an option, it is an expensive proposition in combination with in-floor radiant heat.

In the final analysis, a beautiful Usonian home is attainable today, but care must be given to knowing how to translate Wright’s detailing into today’s homebuilding practices and products. The successful design utilizing Usonian principles will express an authentic character of its construction, the expression of natural materials detailed correctly, fine proportion, a sense of space and an overall unity that comes from the integrated whole.

WISCONSIN WRIGHT SITES Taliesin® \ Hillside Studio and Theater \ Frank Lloyd Wright Visitor Center
A.D. German Warehouse \ Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church \ American System-Built Homes
Monona Terrace® Community and Convention Center \ Seth Peterson Cottage \ SC Johnson Administration Building
Still Bend / Schwartz House \ Unitarian Meeting House \ Wingspread (H.F. Johnson House) \ Wyoming Valley School



As part of your planning to visit a Wright in Wisconsin public site, please use the contact information on page 14 to determine visiting times and conditions.

TOURS & EVENTS
AT WISCONSIN WRIGHT SITES
FALL 2020



© Michael Pipher

Above: Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center, Madison

Public Sites Contact Information

A.D. German Warehouse

Richland Center \ (608) 649-1915
Email info@adgermanwarehouse.org
adgermanwarehouse.org

American System-Built Home Model B-1

Milwaukee
wrightinmilwaukee.org

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church

Wauwatosa \ (414) 461-9400
annunciationwi.org

Monona Terrace

Madison
mononaterrace.com

SC Johnson

Racine \ (262) 260-2154
scjohnson.com/visit

Seth Peterson Cottage

Lake Delton
sethpeterson.org

Still Bend / Schwartz House

Two Rivers
Email michael@stillbend.com
stillbend.com

Taliesin

Spring Green
taliesinpreservation.org

Unitarian Meeting House

Madison \ (608) 233-9774
fusmadison.org/tours

Wingspread – The Johnson Foundation

Wind Point \ (262) 681-3353
scjohnson.com/visit

Wyoming Valley School

Spring Green \ (608) 588-2544
Email wyomingvalleyschool@gmail.com

Frank Lloyd Wright Visitor Center

‘Gateway to Taliesin’ Recognized with Spot on Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places

The Frank Lloyd Wright Visitor Center — formerly known as the Spring Green Restaurant — has been added to the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places for its architectural and historic significance, according to Taliesin Preservation Inc. (TPI)

Carrie Rodamaker, executive director of TPI, said in a statement that she is “delighted” by the recognition.

“We feel exceptionally proud that Wright’s vision of the past is carried forward today and is recognized for its contribution to the Taliesin estate, surrounding Wisconsin communities and the greater architectural world.”

According to Anne Biebel, the architectural historian with Wisconsin-based Cornerstone Preservation LLC who wrote the nomination with support from TPI’s Keiran Murphy:

“During the years Frank Lloyd Wright operated the Taliesin Fellowship, he was dedicated to purchasing farmland near Taliesin and expanded his holdings to more than 2,000 acres. For more than a decade, he had attempted to acquire the riverfront site adjoining Taliesin at the Highway 23 bridge but was thwarted in his efforts. After finally obtaining the property in 1953, he announced his plan to build a casual restaurant that also would provide a scenic tourist destination.

“Drawings were completed that year for the Wisconsin River Terrace & Restaurant for the Taliesin



© Michael Pipher

Fellowship, and construction began in 1954. Work proceeded in stops and starts over the next four years. With assistance from at least two apprentices, Wright continued reworking the drawings into the summer of 1958. All work ended following Wright’s death in 1959 and did not resume for another seven years.

“In 1966 the Wisconsin River Development Corp. purchased much of the property Wright had accumulated to be developed as a resort complex. Taliesin Associated Architects (TAA) was retained to develop a master plan and complete the unfinished building as the Spring Green Restaurant. TAA assigned architect James Pfefferkorn to oversee the project, and construction documents were signed on March 1, 1967, by William Wesley Peters.

“Kraemer Brothers, the builder that assisted Wright with the project in the 1950s, was hired as general contractor. The restaurant opened in the fall

of 1967 with a great deal of positive press and a visit from First Lady Lady Bird Johnson.

“Now better understood as a hospitality facility Wright designed for his personal landscape, the building represents a provocative endpoint in the evolution of his architectural form as demonstrated over the decades at Taliesin. Its streamlined Usonian character places it as reflecting Wright’s mid-20th century architectural and planning interests as were being carried forward by the fellowship

“Since Wright intended the building for his community of architects and apprentices, there could have been no better outcome than TAA overseeing its completion. Wright’s successor firm also designed minor interior modifications in 1993 when the building was put into use as the Frank Lloyd Wright Visitor Center.

“Consistently in use since 1967, the building is in excellent condition and retains remarkable authenticity.”

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT WISCONSIN
HERITAGE TOURISM PROGRAM

P.O. Box 6339
Madison, WI 53716-0339

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VINTAGE
POSTCARD

courtesy of PATRICK J. MAHONEY

This real-photo postcard shows South Main Street in Racine, in the summer of 1906. At center is an early image of attorney Thomas Paul Hardy's house. The notation on the card indicates a date of July 2, 3, 4, 1906, but it was not postmarked until November 1906, from Beloit.

The main axis of the home runs from south to north and is largely symmetrical about its east/west axis. This symmetry reportedly caused the dual street-level entrances to be mistaken for entrances to public beachside changing rooms.

Thomas P. Hardy visited the Darwin D. Martin residence in Buffalo in October 1906.

