Everett E Henderson JrARC6357Professor Dr. Hui Zou2010-11-16Presentation of The Natural House for The Landscape Approach in Architecture.2010-11-16



Gerald Sussman "Usonian Automatic" House (Project), Rye New York. 1955 Perspective. Pencil and color pencil on tracing paper, 36"x25"

As early as 1893 he (FLW) wrote that the house for the American citizen must belong to American soil and reflect a democratic way of living. Imported styles could never be at home in the United States, regardless of the prevalence of poor taste that abounded at the turn of the century. "What is the matter with the typical American house? Well, just for an honest beginning, it lied about everything. It had no sense of unity at all nor such sense of space as should belong to a free people." (77) At the same time he began implementing his new concepts into residential design, he was lecturing and writing about them as well, for example: "Freedom of floor space and elimination of useless heights worked a miracle in the dwelling place. A sense of appropriate freedom had changed its whole aspect. The dwelling became more fit for human habitation on modern terms and far more natural to its site. An entirely new sense of space values in architecture began to come home." (77)

In The Natural House he "explained (the) step by step the process of the design and construction of the Usonian home, in an unusually practical text, which he drew on his earlier writings on specific materials. He also outlined his philosophy on the Usonian home: "Living within a house wherein everything is genuine and harmonious, a new sense of freedom gives one a new sense of life... The Usonian house, then, aims to be a natural performance, one that is integral to site; integral to environment; integral to the life of the inhabitants." (77)

The Usonian houses used "natural concrete block" to help reduce construction costs by reducing labor. They involved handwork.

Book One: 1936-1953 Organic Architecture

What is wrong with the typical American House? It lied about everything. There was no sense of place. It was stuck up in a thoughtless fashion. It had no sense of earth than a "Modernistic" house. To take any one of these so-called "homes" away would have improved the landscape. The thing was more of a hive than a home just as "modernistic" houses are more boxes than houses. (78)

Nor, where the human being is concerned, had this typical dwelling any appropriate sense of proportion whatsoever. The boxes had holes cut into them and then trimmed. The joinery everywhere reigned supreme. (78)

I had an idea (it still seems my very own) that the planes parallel to the earth I buildings identify themselves with the ground, do most to make buildings belong to the ground. (79)

Eliminate the basement and damp cellars... and weld the structure to the ground. (79)

"...idea that the size of the human figure should fix every proportion of a dwelling or of anything in it. Human scale was true building scale." (79) No exaggeration of established orders. (80) They (Japanese Prints) were a lesson in elimination of the insignificant and in the beauty of the natural use of materials. (80)

He speaks of the wrap around window and how it was an expression of a folded plane. Now it is used all over the world and have become part of a senseless formula such as "sporadic international." ... the ideas behind these earlier appearances, the fundamental ideas that made them genuine expressions of architecture, have been altogether missed. (81)

I could draw inspiration from nature herself. I was beholding to no man for the look of anything. (84)

"Welding instead of riveting steel is one new means to this new end and other plastic methods are constantly coming into use." (84)

He was interested in the "nature of materials." He was interested in the appropriate design for the materials. (84)

"Already when I began to build, commercial machine standardization had taken the life of handicraft." "To make the new forms living expression of the new order of the machine and continue what was noble in tradition did trouble me. I wanted to realize genuine new forms true to the spirit of great tradition and found I should have to make them; not only make forms appropriate to the old (natural) and the new (synthetic) materials, but I should have to design them that the machine (or process) that must make them could and would make them better than anything could be possibly be made by hand." (85)

Wright speaks of his earlier 1901 writing "The Art and Craft of the Machine." In the writing he states: "I will venture to say, from personal experience, that not one artist in a hundred has taken pains to thus educate himself. I will go further to say what I believe to be true, that not one educational institution in America has as yet attempted to forge the connecting link between science and art by training the artist to his actual tools, or, by a process of nature-study that develops in him power of independent thought, fitting him to use them properly." (89) Wright, F. L. (1901). The Art and Craft of the Machine. *Brush and Pencil, 8:2*(May), 77.

Building The New House

...first, get rid of the attic... therefore the dormer. Next, get rid of the basement. Use one chimney only. The human being is the scale... bring the scale down...and my size is 5'-8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " tall. Walls are not to have holes punched in them for windows. "The house (prairie house) began to associate with the ground and become natural to its prairie site." (90)

Simplicity

He speaks of cutting up of spaces called rooms. Remove the interior doors and partitions. Don't use the guillotine window. The "trim" is not to look like carpenter work... there is not to be "cut and butt." (91)

Furniture that is not built into the house should remain an attribute to the house. (92) When the client brought their furnishings in, it was painful to FLW. They did not belong. **Plasticity**

Plasticity may be seen in the expressive flesh-covering of the skeleton as contrasted with the articulation of the skeleton itself." (92) "I could get no help at all from regular engineers. By habit, the engineer reduced everything in the field of calculation to the post and beam resting upon it before he could calculate and tell you where and just how much for either. He had no other data. Walls made one with the floors and ceilings, merging together yet reacting upon each other." (93)

Wright, Frank Lloyd, and Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer. Frank Lloyd Wright Collected Writings. New York [Scottsdale, AZ]: Rizzoli ; Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, 1995. (1954 The Natural House Pages 77-127)

In The Nature Of Materials: A Philosophy

"...after five centuries of decline, culminated in the imitation of imitations, seen in our Mrs. Plasterbuilt, Mrs. Gablemore, and Miss Flat-top American architecture. In general, and especially officially, our architecture is at long last completely significant of insignificance only." (94)

Said Ong Giao Ki, Chinese sage, "Poetry is the sound of the heart." Well, like poetry, this sense of architecture is the sound of the "within". We might call that "within" the heart. (94) A New Reality: Glass

"This dawning sense of the *Within* as *reality* when it is clearly seen as *Nature* will by way of glass make the garden be the building as much as the building will be the garden: the sky as treasured a feature of daily indoor life as the ground itself." (95)

Another Reality: Continuity

Steel is the new material that will allow us to get past post and beam construction. (96) Steel allows for economy of mass, as opposed to the ancients.

"It is by utilizing mass production in the factory in this connection that some idea of the remarkable new economics possible to modern architecture may be seen approaching those realized in any well built machine. If standardization can be humanized and made flexible in design and the economics brought to the home owner, the greatest service will be rendered to our modern way of life." (97)

Materials For Their Own Sake

"A stone building will no more be nor will it look like a steel building." (98)

Nature-Pattern – "It is this profound internal sense of materials that enters in as Architecture now." (99)

The New Integrity Integral Ornament At Last Great Power The Machine Age

The Usonian House I No visible roof, carport – not garage, no basement, no "trim", no radiators, no light fixtures, no furniture, no pictures, just built-ins, no painting- just wood exposed, concrete floors, no plaster, no gutters or downspouts. Big living room, vista and garden coming in, open bookshelves and fireplace. The bathroom is not off of a single room. The house should be parallel to the ground. It should be grounded.

The Usonian House II Gravity Heat Floor heat. Concerning The Usonian House "Open Plan"

Book Two:1954 Integrity: In A House As In An Individual

From The Ground Up – Where To Build What Kind Of Land A Suitable Foundation Advanages Of The Berm-Type How To Light A House The Great Luminary The Basement Insulation And Heating The Kind Of Roof The Attic Size Of Kitchen The Client And The House **Expanding For Growing Family** Childers's Rooms Furnishings Chairs Paint Air Conditioning? Grammar: The House As A Work Of Art The Contractor

The Architect Of The Future To get a Usonian house, you must get a Usonian Architect. This means that the architect has been trained from the ground up in consistent organic construction and has lived in it as a natural circumstance. "I doubt that this affair can be taught to anyone. It does not come from a university with some degree or other."(122)

It Is Valiant To Be Simple The "Usonian Automatic" Reducing The Costs

How The "Usoniam Automatic" Is Built "The Usonian Automatic is capable of infinite modifications of form, pattern and application, and to any extent. The original blocks are made on the site by ramming concrete into wood or metal wrap around forms, with the outside face (which may be patterned), and one rear or inside face, generally coffered, for lightness." (124)

Organic Architecture And The Orient The Philosophy And The Deed

CREDO:

I believe a house is more a home by being a work of Art.

I believe the man is more a man by being an individual rather than a committee-meeting.

For these two reasons, I believe Democracy (though difficult) is the highest known form of society.

I believe Democracy is the new innate aristocracy our humanity needs.

I believe success in any form consists in making these truths a reality according to ability.

I believe all agencies tending to confuse and frustrate these truths are now continuous and expedient – therefore to be exposed and rejected.

I believe truth to be our organic divinity.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

Endpaper of The Natural House, Horizon Press, New York, 1954

Florida Southern Plans to Add a Usonian House to Its Wright Collection

March 26, 2010, 2:00 pm By Lawrence Biemiller



Florida Southern College plans to build a house that Frank Lloyd Wright designed in 1938 as the first of a series of homes for faculty members. (Florida Southern College image)

http://chronicle.com/blogs/buildings/florida-southern-plans-to-add-a-usonian-house-to-its-wright-collection/22100



FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

THE NATURAL HOUSE



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The Danforth Chapel is the smaller of two chapels that Frank Lloyd Wright designed for Florida Southern College. (Chronicle photographs by Lawrence Biemiller)



Wright's master plan for the college showed buildings connected by covered walkways referred to as "esplanades."



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Wright cantilevered the esplanade roofs off of surprisingly-shaped supports on one side.



The Polk County Science Building incorporates the esplanade design.



Most of Wright's campus buildings, including the science building, are constructed with concrete blocks molded on the campus to Wright's specifications. This is the interior of a classroom in the science building.



The larger of the two chapels, the Annie Pfeiffer Chapel, uses similar blocks, many of them pierced with small pieces of colored glass. The chapel's unique tower has skylights within.



The large chapel's two-story interior is designed with a raised platform of which those seated in the balcony have a good view.



The chapel's tower is visible among citrus trees planted alongside the esplanade leading from the science building.



Wright's administration complex has a series of memorable cantilevered sunscreens that shade windows.



Many of the Wright buildings on the college's campus were constructed with blocks like this one, seen with its mold in the campus museum. (Chronicle photograph)

Florida Southern Plans to Add a Usonian House to Its Wright Collection

March 26, 2010, 2:00 pm By Lawrence Biemiller



Florida Southern College plans to build a house that Frank Lloyd Wright designed in 1938 as the first of a series of homes for faculty members. (Florida Southern College image)

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wright collection	

Pictures of Wright Buildings at Florida Southern College

March 29, 2010, 7:00 am By Lawrence Biemiller



The Danforth Chapel is the smaller of two chapels that Frank Lloyd Wright designed for Florida Southern College. (Chronicle photographs by Lawrence Biemiller)

Some readers may not be familiar with Frank Lloyd Wright's work at Florida Southern College. The Chronicle ran an article about the college's restoration efforts in 2007; here are some photos taken at the same time. -Lawrence Biemiller



Wright's master plan for the college showed buildings connected by covered walkways referred to as "esplanades."



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Florida Southern Plans to Add a Usonian House to Its Wright Collection

March 26, 2010, 2:00 pm By Lawrence Biemiller



Florida Southern College plans to build a house that Frank Lloyd Wright designed in 1938 as the first of a series of homes for faculty members. (Florida Southern College image)

In 1938, not long after he began work on a master plan for Florida Southern College's campus, the architect Frank Lloyd Wright sketched a series of small homes for faculty members. Wright and Ludd M. Spivey, Florida Southern's president, hoped to build as many as 20 houses, but money for them never materialized. The house plans ended up gathering dust while the college built a library, two chapels, administrative offices, a series of academic buildings, and a huge fountain to Wright's striking designs. In fact, the college has the largest single collection of Wright buildings anywhere.

Now Florida Southern, located in Lakeland, is finally gearing up to build one of the Wright houses. According to M. Jeffrey Baker, a partner in Mesick Cohen Wilson Baker Architects who has been helping the college restore its other Wright buildings, the house will be a flatroofed, two-bedroom home with walls made of the same custom-cast blocks that Wright used throughout the campus. A cantilevered carport will mark the entrance, and floor-to-ceiling glass windows will open to the outdoors from the living room and the bedrooms. "You can open this house up like a pavilion," Mr. Baker says, to take advantage of the patio and good weather.

The 1,700-square-foot house is among Wright's "Usonian" designs, which he hoped would make good modern homes affordable to middleclass families. No one will live in this house, however. Instead, it will be the first stop for tourists visiting the campus. They'll be able to watch a short film about Wright's work at Florida Southern, pick up campus maps, and browse in a gift shop before crossing the street to see Wright's other buildings.

Mr. Baker says that working with an unbuilt Wright design is "something I've always wanted to do." But there will be a number of challenges.

For one thing, building codes have changed significantly since Wright's day. Accommodating his plan and materials to modern energy and hurricane-survival rules, Mr. Baker says, will require some creativity. Also, the system Wright used to the his cast blocks together in other campus buildings has proved troublesome—iron bars inside the blocks hold them together, but moisture has seeped in and made the bars rust, which in turn has cracked the blocks.

"It's a balancing act to make sure we don't touch Wright's design and make sure that even the structural system is respected," Mr. Baker says. He thinks that substituting stainless steel for the iron will help, as will improving the recipe for the concrete in the blocks. For the original buildings, students mixed the concrete and filled molds right at the construction sites—the college still has all the molds—but Mr. Baker says blocks for the house will be made elsewhere.

Even though the house will not be lived in, its layout will adhere to Wright's intentions, says Mr. Baker, who hopes to be able to put a bed in one of the bedrooms so visitors can see exactly what the house would look like as a home. The house will be built alongside an existing 1920s Sears-catalogue bungalow, and as part of the \$2-million project the bungalow will be renovated to house offices and handicappedaccess bathrooms for the visitor center. The college is still raising money to pay for the site, the bungalow, and construction, but a groundbreaking ceremony took place March 20.

Mr. Baker says that Florida Southern has been in close contact with the Wright archives at Taliesin West, Wright's Arizona home and architecture school, and that he has been consulting with Antony Putnam, a former Wright apprentice. "It's kind of exciting," Mr. Baker says, "to be able to work with these people who worked with Wright."



Many of the Wright buildings on the college's campus were constructed with blocks like this one, seen with its mold in the campus museum. (Chronicle photograph)

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