

Robie House

Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright

Frank Lloyd Wright (born **Frank Lincoln Wright**, June 8, 1867 – April 9, 1959) was an [American architect](#), [interior designer](#), [writer](#) and [educator](#), who designed more than 1,000 projects, which resulted in more than 500 completed works. Wright promoted [organic architecture](#) (exemplified by [Fallingwater](#)), was a leader of the [Prairie School](#) movement of architecture (exemplified by the [Robie House](#) and the [Westcott House](#)), and developed the concept of the [Usonian](#) home (exemplified by the [Rosenbaum House](#)). His work includes original and innovative examples of many different building types, including offices, churches, schools, sky scrapers, hotels, and museums. Wright also often designed many of the interior elements of his buildings, such as the furniture and [stained glass](#).

Wright authored 20 books and many articles, and was a popular lecturer in the [United States](#) and in [Europe](#). His colorful personal life often made headlines, most notably for the 1914 fire and murders at his [Taliesin studio](#).

Already well-known during his lifetime, Wright was recognized in 1991 by the [American Institute of Architects](#) as "the greatest American architect of all time".

Early years

Frank Lloyd Wright was born in the farming town of [Richland Center, Wisconsin](#), United States, in 1867. Originally named Frank Lincoln Wright, he changed his name after his parents' divorce to honor his mother's [Welsh](#) family, the Lloyd Joneses. His father, William Carey Wright (1825 – 1904) was a locally admired orator, music teacher, occasional lawyer and itinerant minister. William Wright had met and married Anna Lloyd Jones (1838/39 – 1923), a county school teacher, the previous year when he was employed as the superintendent of schools for [Richland County](#). Originally from [Massachusetts](#), William Wright had been a [Baptist](#) minister but he later joined his wife's family in the [Unitarian](#) faith. Anna was a member of the large, prosperous and well-known Lloyd Jones family of Unitarians, who had emigrated from [Wales](#) to Spring Green, Wisconsin. Both of Wright's parents were strong-willed individuals with idiosyncratic interests that they passed on to Frank. In his biography his mother declared, when she was

expecting her first child, that he would grow up to build beautiful buildings. She decorated his nursery with engravings of English cathedrals torn from a periodical to encourage the infant's ambition. The family moved to [Weymouth, Massachusetts](#) in 1870 for William to minister a small congregation.

In 1876, Anna visited the [Centennial Exhibition](#) in Philadelphia and saw an exhibit of educational blocks created by [Friedrich Wilhelm August Fröbel](#). The blocks, known as [Froebel Gifts](#), were the foundation of his innovative [kindergarten](#) curriculum. A trained teacher, Anna was excited by the program and bought a set of blocks for her family. Young Frank spent much time playing with the blocks. These were geometrically-shaped and could be assembled in various combinations to form three-dimensional compositions. Wright's [autobiography](#) talks about the influence of these exercises on his approach to design. Many of his buildings are notable for the geometrical clarity they exhibit.

The Wright family struggled financially in Weymouth and returned to [Spring Green, Wisconsin](#), where the supportive Lloyd Jones clan could help William find employment. They settled in [Madison](#), where William taught music lessons and served as the secretary to the newly formed Unitarian society. Although William was a distant parent, he shared his love of music, especially the works of [Johann Sebastian Bach](#), with his children.

Soon after Frank turned 14 — in 1881 — his parents separated. Anna had been unhappy for some time with William's inability to provide for his family and asked him to leave. The divorce was finalized in 1885 after William sued Anna for lack of physical affection. William left Wisconsin after the divorce and Wright claimed he never saw his father again. At this time Frank's middle name was changed from Lincoln to Lloyd. As the only male left in the family, Frank assumed financial responsibility for his mother and two sisters.

Wright attended a Madison [high school](#) but there is no evidence he ever graduated. He was admitted to the [University of Wisconsin–Madison](#) as a special student in 1886. There he joined [Phi Delta Theta fraternity](#), took classes part-time for two semesters, and worked with a professor of [civil engineering](#), [Allan D. Conover](#). In 1887, Wright left the school without taking a degree (although he was granted an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the University in 1955). He moved to [Chicago](#) which was still rebuilding from the [Great Chicago Fire of 1871](#), and he joined the architectural firm of [Joseph Lyman Silsbee](#). Within a year, he

left Silsbee to work for the firm of [Adler & Sullivan](#) as an apprentice to [Louis Sullivan](#).

In 1889, he married his first wife, Catherine Lee "Kitty" Tobin (1871–1959), purchased land in [Oak Park, Illinois](#), and built his first home, and eventually his studio there. His mother, Anna, soon followed Wright to the city, where he purchased a home adjacent to his newly built residence for her. His marriage to Kitty Tobin, the daughter of a wealthy businessman, raised his social status, and he became better known.

Beginning in 1890, he was assigned all residential design work for the firm. In 1893, Louis Sullivan discovered that Wright had been accepting private commissions. Sullivan felt betrayed that his favored employee had designed houses "behind his back," and he asked Wright to leave the firm. Constantly in need of funds to support his growing family, Wright designed the homes to supplement his meager income. Wright referred to these houses as his "bootleg" designs; three of which (Parker, William Gale and Thomas Gale) are located near the [Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio](#), on Chicago Avenue in Oak Park; and another two of which (Blossom and MacArthur) are located on Kenwood Avenue in Chicago . After leaving Sullivan, Wright established his own practice at his home.

This practice was a remarkable collection of creative architectural designers. By 1901, Wright had completed about 50 projects, including many houses in Oak Park. As his son John Lloyd Wright wrote,

“[William Eugene Drummond](#), Francis [Barry Byrne](#), [Walter Burley Griffin](#), [Albert Chase McArthur](#), [Marion Mahony](#), [Isabel Roberts](#) and [George Willis](#) were the draftsmen. Five men, two women. They wore flowing ties, and smocks suitable to the realm. The men wore their hair like Papa, all except Albert, he didn't have enough hair. They worshiped Papa! Papa liked them! I know that each one of them was then making valuable contributions to the pioneering of the modern American architecture for which my father gets the full glory, headaches and recognition today! ”

Prairie House

Between 1900 and 1917, his residential designs were "[Prairie Houses](#)", so-called

because the design is considered to complement the land around [Chicago](#). These houses featured extended low buildings with shallow, sloping roofs, clean sky lines, suppressed chimneys, overhangs and terraces, using unfinished materials. The houses are credited with being the first examples of the "[open plan](#)."

The manipulation of interior space in residential and public buildings are hallmarks of his style. One such building is [Unity Temple](#), the home of the Unitarian Universalist congregation in Oak Park. As a lifelong [Unitarian](#) and member of Unity Temple, Wright offered his services to the congregation after their church burned down in 1904. The community agreed to hire him and he worked on the building from 1905 to 1908. He believed that humanity should be central to all design.

The [Westcott House](#) was built in [Springfield, Ohio](#), sometime between 1907 and 1908. It not only embodies Wright's innovative Prairie Style design, but also reflects his passion for [Japanese art](#) and culture in design traits characteristic of traditional Japanese design. It is the only Prairie house built in Ohio, and represents an important evolution of Wright's Prairie concept. The house has an extensive 98-foot [pergola](#), capped with an intricate wooden [trellis](#), connecting a detached carriage house and garage to the main house—features of only a few of Wright's later Prairie Style designs.

It is not known exactly when Wright designed The Westcott House; it may have been several months before or more than a year after Wright returned from his first trip to [Japan](#) in 1905. Wright created two separate designs for the Westcott House; both are included in *Studies and Executed Buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright*, published by the distinguished Ernst Wasmuth ([Germany](#), 1910–1911). This two-volume work contains more than 100 [lithographs](#) of Wright's designs and is commonly known as the [Wasmuth Portfolio](#).

Other Wright houses considered to be masterpieces of the late Prairie Period (1907–1909) are the Frederick [Robie House](#) in Chicago and the Avery and Queene [Coonley House](#) in [Riverside, Illinois](#). The Robie House, with its soaring, [cantilevered](#) roof lines, supported by a 110-foot (34 m)-long channel of steel, is the most dramatic. Its living and dining areas form virtually one uninterrupted space. This building had a profound influence on young European architects after [World War I](#) and is sometimes called the "cornerstone of modernism". However,

Wright's work was not known to European architects until the publication of the Wasmuth Portfolio.

Death and legacy

Turmoil followed Wright even many years after his death on April 9, 1959. His third wife, Olgivanna, ran [the Fellowship](#) after Wright's death, until her own death in [Scottsdale, Arizona](#) in 1985. In 1985, it was learned that her dying wish had been that Wright, she and her daughter by a first marriage all be cremated and relocated to [Scottsdale, Arizona](#). By then, Wright's body had lain for over 25 years in the Lloyd-Jones [cemetery](#), next to the Unity Chapel, near Taliesin, Wright's later-life home in [Spring Green, Wisconsin](#). Olgivanna's plan called for a memorial garden, already in the works, to be finished and prepared for their remains. Although the garden had yet to be finished, his remains were prepared and sent to Scottsdale where they waited in storage for an unidentified amount of time before being interred in the memorial area. Today, the small cemetery south of Spring Green, Wisconsin and a long stone's throw from Taliesin, contains a gravestone marked with Wright's name but its grave is empty.

Personal style and concepts

Wright practiced what is known as [organic architecture](#), an architecture that evolves naturally out of the context, most importantly for him the relationship between the site and the building and the needs of the client. For example, houses in wooded regions made heavy use of wood, desert houses had rambling floor plans and heavy use of stone, and houses in rocky areas such as [Los Angeles](#) were built mainly of [cinder block](#).

Wright's creations took his concern with organic architecture down to the smallest details. From his largest commercial commissions to the relatively modest Usonian houses, Wright conceived virtually every detail of both the external design and the internal fixtures, including [furniture](#), [carpets](#), windows, doors, tables and chairs, light fittings and decorative elements. He was one of the first architects to design and supply custom-made, purpose-built furniture and fittings that functioned as integrated parts of the whole design, and he often returned to earlier commissions to redesign internal fittings. Some of the built-in furniture remains, while other restorations have included replacement pieces created

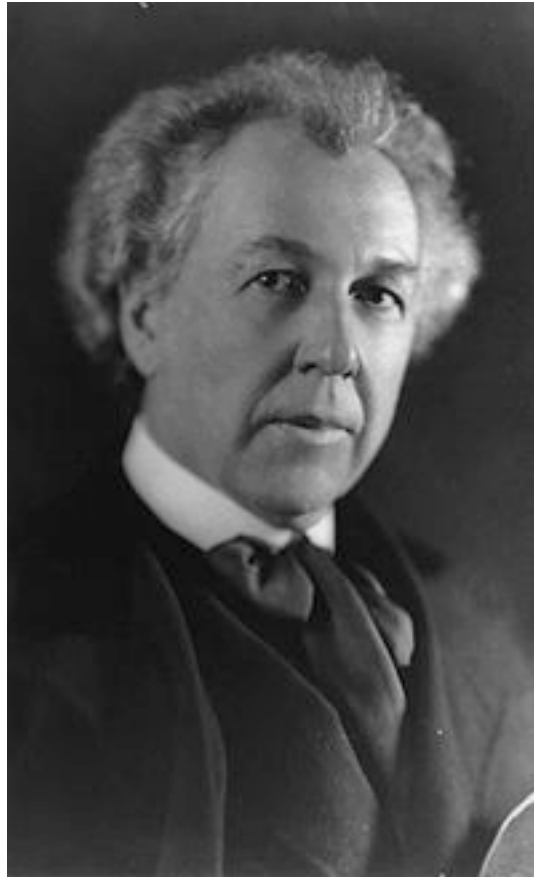
using his plans. His Prairie houses use themed, coordinated design elements (often based on plant forms) that are repeated in windows, carpets and other fittings. He made innovative use of new building materials such as [precast concrete](#) blocks, glass bricks and zinc [comes](#) (instead of the traditional [lead](#)) for his leadlight windows, and he famously used [Pyrex](#) glass tubing as a major element in the [Johnson Wax Headquarters](#). Wright was also one of the first architects to design and install custom-made electric light fittings, including some of the very first electric floor lamps, and his very early use of the then-novel spherical glass lampshade (a design previously not possible due to the physical restrictions of gas lighting).

As Wright's career progressed, so did the mechanization of the glass industry. Wright fully embraced glass in his designs and found that it fit well into his philosophy of organic architecture. Glass allowed for interaction and viewing of the outdoors while still protecting from the elements. In 1928, Wright wrote an essay on glass in which he compared it to the mirrors of nature: lakes, rivers and ponds. One of Wright's earliest uses of glass in his works was to string panes of glass along whole walls in an attempt to create light screens to join together solid walls. By utilizing this large amount of glass, Wright sought to achieve a balance between the lightness and airiness of the glass and the solid, hard walls. Arguably, Wright's most well-known art glass is that of the Prairie style. The simple geometric shapes that yield to very ornate and intricate windows represent some of the most integral ornamentation of his career.

Wright responded to the transformation of domestic life that occurred at the turn of the 20th century, when servants became a less prominent or completely absent from most American households, by developing homes with progressively more open plans. This allowed the woman of the house to work in her 'workspace', as he often called the kitchen, yet keep track of and be available for the children and/or guests in the dining room. Much of modern architecture, including the early work of [Mies van der Rohe](#), can be traced back to Wright's innovative work.

Wright also designed some of his own clothing. His fashion sense was unique and he usually wore expensive suits, flowing neckties, and capes. He drove a custom yellow raceabout in the Prairie years, a red [Cord](#) convertible in the 1930s,

and a famously customized 1940 Lincoln for many years, each of which earned him many speeding tickets.



The Robie House

The **Frederick C. Robie House** is a U.S [National Historic Landmark](#) in the [Chicago, Illinois](#) neighborhood of [Hyde Park](#) at 5757 S. Woodlawn Avenue on the [South Side](#). It was designed and built between 1908 and 1910 by architect [Frank Lloyd Wright](#) and is renowned as the greatest example of his [Prairie style](#), the first architectural style that was uniquely American. It was designated a [National Historic Landmark](#) on November 27, 1963 and was on the very first [National Register of Historic Places](#) list of October 15,

1966.

History

Wright designed the Robie House in his [studio](#) in [Oak Park, Illinois](#) between 1908 and 1909. The design precedent for the Robie House was the [Ferdinand F. Tomek House](#) in Riverside, Illinois, designed by Wright in 1907-08. At the time that he commissioned Wright to design his home, Robie was only 28 years old and the assistant manager of the Excelsior Supply Company, a company on the South Side of Chicago owned and managed by his father. Although later drawings of the Robie House show a date of 1906, Wright could not have started the design for the building earlier than the spring of 1908 because Robie had actually purchased the property only in May of that year. He and his wife, Lora Hieronymus Robie, a 1900 graduate of the University of Chicago, had selected the property at 5757 South Woodlawn Avenue in order to remain close to the campus and the social life of the University. The property was a typical urban lot in Hyde Park, measuring 60 feet by 180 feet.

The contractor for the project, H.B. Barnard Co. of Chicago, began construction on April 15, 1909. Wright did not supervise the construction of the house except in the earliest stages. He closed his Oak Park studio in the fall of 1909 and left for Europe to undertake the work which led to the publication of the [Wasmuth Portfolio](#). He turned over his existing commissions to [Hermann von Holst](#), who retained [Marion Mahony](#), an architect in Wright's office, and George Mann Niedecken, an interior designer from Milwaukee, Wisconsin who had worked with Wright on the [Susan Lawrence Dana House](#) in Springfield, Illinois, the [Avery Coonley House](#) in Riverside, Illinois, and the [Meyer May House](#) in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to continue their work on the project. Niedecken's influence can be seen in the design of some of the furnishings for the house as well as the carpets in the entrance hall, the living room, and the dining room.

The Robie family—Frederick, Laura, and their two children, Frederick Jr. and Lorraine—moved into the home in May 1910, although all of the final details, including rugs and furniture, were not completed until January 1911. The final cost of the home was \$58,500--\$13,500 for the land, \$35,000 for the design and construction of the building, and \$10,000 for the furnishings. (\$58,500 in 1910 is

approximately equal to \$1,300,000 in 2007.) Robie's original budget had been \$60,000.

Robie's tenure in his home was short lived, however. As a result of financial problems incurred by the death of his father in July 1909 and the deterioration of his marriage, Robie was forced to sell the house after living in it for only fourteen months. David Lee Taylor, president of Taylor-Critchfield Company, an advertising agency, bought the house and all of its Wright-designed contents in December 1911. Taylor died less than a year later, and his widow, Ellen Taylor, sold the house and most of its contents to Marshall D. Wilber, treasurer of the Wilber Mercantile Agency, in November 1912. The Wilbers were the last family to live in Robie House, residing there for 14 years.

In June 1926 the Wilbers sold the house and its contents to the [Chicago Theological Seminary](#), who used the house as a dormitory and dining hall although it was primarily interested in the site for purposes of future expansion. In 1941, a graduate student at the Illinois Institute of Technology accidentally discovered that the Seminary was moving ahead with a plan to demolish the Robie House and informed his instructors, including [Ludwig Mies van der Rohe](#). The threat of demolition aroused a storm of protest. Although the Seminary's plans were subsequently postponed, the crisis was averted more by the onset of World War II than by acquiescence of the property's owner.

The most serious threat to the existence of the Robie House arose 16 years later. On March 1, 1957, the Seminary announced plans to demolish the Robie House on September 15 in order to begin the construction of a dormitory for its students. This time an international outcry arose, and Wright himself, then 90 years old, returned to the Robie House on March 18, accompanied by the media, students and neighborhood organizers to protest the intended demolition of the house. Commenting on the threatened demolition, Wright quipped, "It all goes to show the danger of entrusting anything spiritual to the clergy." Fortunately, only weeks earlier, the Chicago City Council, led by Hyde Park alderman [Leon Depres](#), had enacted an ordinance to create the [Commission on Chicago Landmarks](#). By April 18, the newly formed Commission, with the support of Mayor [Richard J. Daley](#),

declared the Robie House a Chicago landmark. Moreover, two fraternities at the University of Chicago provided the Seminary with a realistic alternative to its plans of demolition. During his very brief tenure as a student at the University of Wisconsin, Wright had been a member of the [Phi Delta Theta](#) fraternity. The University of Chicago's Phi Delt chapter house was located two doors north of the Robie house at 5737 Woodlawn Avenue, and the Seminary was already the owner of the lot between the two properties. The Phi Delts offered to vacate their house, and the [Zeta Beta Tau](#) fraternity, located next to the Phi Delt house, offered to vacate their house as well. These offers were a turning point in the effort to save the Robie house since the three properties provided the Seminary with sufficient land for the dormitory they sought to build.

In August 1958, [William Zeckendorf](#), a friend of Wright's and a New York real estate developer then involved in several development projects on Chicago's south side, acquired the Robie House at Wright's urging from the seminary through his development company Webb & Knapp. In February 1963, Zeckendorf donated the building to the University of Chicago. The University used Robie House as the Adlai E. Stevenson Institute of International Affairs, and later the building served as the headquarters for the University's Alumni Association.

In January 1997 the University moved their offices out and turned over tours, operations, fundraising and restoration to the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust on February 1. Beginning in March 2002, the Preservation Trust has undertaken the historic restoration of the Robie House, returning the building to its condition when completed in 1910. The entire restoration has an estimated cost of \$10 million and is expected to be completed by the building's centennial in 2010.

Architecture

The Robie House is one of the best known examples of Frank Lloyd Wright's [Prairie style](#) of architecture. The term was coined by architectural critics and historians (not by Wright) who noticed how the buildings and their various components owed their design influence to the landscape and plant life of the midwest prairie of the United States. Typical of Wright's Prairie houses, he

designed not only the house, but all of the interiors, the windows, lighting, rugs, furniture and textiles. As Wright wrote in 1910, "it is quite impossible to consider the building one thing and its furnishings another. ... They are all mere structural details of its character and completeness." Every element Wright designed is meant to be thought of as part of the larger artistic idea of the house.

Exterior

The projecting [cantilevered](#) roof eaves, continuous bands of art-glass windows, and the use of [Roman brick](#) emphasize the horizontal, which had rich associations for Wright. The horizontal line reminded him of the American prairie and was a line of repose and shelter, appropriate for a house. The exterior walls are double-[wythe](#) construction of a Chicago common brick core with a red-orange iron-spotted Roman brick veneer. To further emphasize the horizontal of the bricks, the horizontal joints were filled with a cream-colored mortar and the small vertical joints were filled with brick-colored mortar. From a distance, this complex and expensive [tuckpointing](#) creates an impression of continuous lines of horizontal color and minimizes the appearance of individual bricks. The design of the art glass windows is an abstract pattern of colored and clear glass using Wright's favorite 30 and 60-degree angles. Wright used similar designs in tapestries inside the house and for gates surrounding the outdoor spaces and enclosing the garage courtyard. Robie's generous budget allowed Wright to design a house with a largely steel structure, which accounts for the minimal deflection of the eaves. The planter urns, copings, lintels, sills and other exterior trimwork are of Bedford limestone.

Interior

In plan, the house is designed as two large rectangles that seem to slide by one another. Mr. Wright referred to the rectangle on the southwest portion of the site, which contains the principal living spaces of the house, as "the major vessel." On the first floor are the "billiards" room (west end) and children's playroom (east end). These two rooms open through central doors to an enclosed garden on the south side of the building. A door from the playroom opens into the courtyard on the east end of the site. On the second floor are the entry hall at the top of the

central stairway, the living room (west end) and the dining room (east end). An inglenook originally separated the entry hallway from the living room. The living and dining rooms flow into one another along the south side of the building and open through a series of twelve French doors containing art glass panels to an exterior balcony running the length of the south side of the building that overlooks the enclosed garden. The west end of the living room contains the “prow” with art glass windows and two art glass doors that open onto the west porch beneath the cantilevered roof. Wright intended that the users of the building move freely from the interior space to the exterior space.

The rectangle on the northeast portion of the site, called "the minor vessel," contains the more functional and service-related rooms of the house. On the first floor is the main door and entrance hall (west end) from which a stairway leads to the second floor living and dining rooms. A half bath is located on the north side of the entrance hall. Further east are a coat closet and back stairway, the boiler room, laundry room, and coal storage room, followed by a small workshop, half bath, and a three-car garage. The western most bay of the garage originally contained a mechanic's pit, and the eastern most bay contained equipment to wash and clean automobiles. On the second floor of the minor vessel is a guest bedroom above the entrance hall and an adjoining full bath. East of the back stairway are the kitchen and butler's pantry, and the servants' sitting room. Two bedrooms and a full bathroom above the garage complete the quarters for the live-in servants.

The third floor overlaps the major and minor vessels in the center of the building. Wright referred to the third floor as the “belvedere,” the “place in command of beautiful views.” The south side of the third floor contains the master bedroom, dressing area, a full bathroom, and, through a small closet, a balcony facing west. Two additional bedrooms and a full bathroom are located on the north side of this floor. All of the windows on this level contain art glass panels.

The entire building is approximately 9,062 square feet.

The chimney mass containing four fireplaces—one in the billiards room, playroom, living room and master bedroom—and the main stairway from the entrance hall to the second floor living and dining rooms rise through the center

of the house, from which the rest of the building radiates. The chimney mass is constructed of the same brick and limestone as the exterior.

The front door and main entrance is partially hidden on the northwest side of the building beneath an overhanging balcony in order to create a sense of privacy and protection for the family. The entrance hall itself is low-ceilinged and dark, but the stairs to the second floor create a sense of anticipation as the visitor moves upward. Once upstairs, the light filled living and dining rooms create a sharp contrast to the dark entrance hall making the living and dining rooms seem even more special. These two rooms are separated by the central chimney mass, but the spaces are connected along their south sides, and the chimney mass has an opening above the fireplace through which the rooms are visually connected. These features unite the two spaces, creating an openness of plan which, for Wright, was a metaphor for the openness of American political and social life.

As with all Prairie houses, Wright designed the light fixtures for the Robie House. Throughout the house, wall sconces can be found in the shape of a hemispherical shade suspended beneath a square bronze fixture. On the second floor living and dining rooms, spherical globes within wooden squares are integrated into the ceiling trim, further tying the two spaces together visually. Soffit lighting running the length of the north and south sides of the living and dining rooms, as well as soffit lighting in the prows of the living and dining rooms, are covered with Wright-designed wooden grilles. Because these lights are all independently operable, different effects can be created within these spaces. Finally, a Wright-designed table lamp with an art glass shade stood on a Wright-designed library table in the living room.

The steel beams in the ceilings and floors carrying most of the building's weight to piers at the east and west ends. As a result, the exterior walls have little structural function, and thus are filled with doors and windows containing art glass panels. The house contains 174 art glass window and door panels in 29 different designs. Although Wright occasionally designed art glass using stylized forms from nature, the designs of the Robie House art glass are simply abstract geometric forms. The steel structure also eliminates the need for internal structural columns and walls, accenting the open plan Wright favored.

Wright also designed the furniture, carpets, and textiles for most Prairie houses. However, Wright-designed furniture in the Robie House was only constructed for the entrance hall, the living and dining rooms, guest bedroom, and one bed for the third-floor bedrooms. Robie's financial situation following his father's death may be the explanation for why the entire house was not furnished with furniture of Wright's designs. Most of the original furniture is currently in the collection of the [Smart Museum of Art](#) at the University of Chicago although only the dining room table and chairs are on display. One of the most striking pieces of the furniture designed by Wright for the Robie House is a sofa with extended armrests, echoing the cantilevers of the exterior roof of the building, which effectively create side tables on each side of the sofa. The Wright-designed sofa has been on loan since 1982 from the Smart Museum to the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#) in New York and is on display as part of the furnishings in the reconstructed living room of the Francis W. Little House (1915) located in the museum.

Architectural significance

The Robie House was one of the last houses Wright designed in his [Oak Park, Illinois](#) home and studio and also one of the last of his Prairie School houses. According to the Historical American Buildings Survey, the city of Chicago's Commission on Chicago Architectural Landmarks stated: "The bold interplay of horizontal planes about the chimney mass, and the structurally expressive piers and windows, established a new form of domestic design." Because the house's components are so well designed and coordinated, it is considered to be a quintessential example of Wright's Prairie School architecture and the "measuring stick" against which all other Prairie School buildings are compared.

The house and the Robie name were immortalized in Ernst Wasmuth's famous 1910 publication "Ausgefuehrte Bauten und Entwurfe von Frank Lloyd Wright" (a.k.a. "The Wasmuth Portfolio"). This publication featured most of Wright's designs, including those unbuilt, during his Oak Park years and brought them to the attention of European architects of 1920s, especially students of the [Bauhaus](#) school in Germany and the [De Stijl](#) school in Holland. [Ludwig Mies van der Rohe](#) among other great 20th Century architects, claimed Wright was a major influence on their careers.

The architectural significance of the Robie House was probably best stated in a 1957 article in *House and Home* magazine:

During the decades of eclecticism's triumph there were also many innovators--less heralded than the fashionable practitioners, but exerting more lasting influence. Of these innovators, none could rival Frank Lloyd Wright. By any standard his Robie house was the House of the 1900s--indeed the House of the Century.

Above all else, the Robie house is a magnificent work of art. But, in addition, the house introduced so many concepts in planning and construction that its full influence cannot be measured accurately for many years to come. Without this house, much of modern architecture as we know it today, might not exist.

In 1956, *The Architectural Record* selected the Robie House as "one of the seven most notable residences ever built in America." In 2008, the [U.S. National Park Service](#) submitted the Robie house, along with nine other Frank Lloyd Wright properties, to a tentative list for World Heritage Status. The 10 sites have been submitted as one entire site. The January 22, 2008, press release from the National Park Service website announcing the nominations states that "[t]he preparation of a Tentative List is a necessary first step in the process of nominating a site to the World Heritage List."

The Charles M. Harper Center (formerly the Hyde Park Center) (Rafael Viñoly, architect).

Neighborhood Context

Directly across 58th Street from the Robie House is the Charles M. Harper Center of the [University of Chicago Booth School of Business](#). Designed by the Uruguayan-born architect [Rafael Viñoly](#) and completed in 2004, the building both respects the scale of the Robie House and contains elements that echo Wright's contributions to the vocabulary of modern architecture. "The massing was considered with that of the surrounding buildings of the campus and the neighborhood," Viñoly said. More specifically, Viñoly selected the linear limestone and cantilevered floors with the Robie House in mind. In addition, built-in planters edge the second floor balconies and surround the entranceway terrace, echoing

those found on the Robie House balconies and porches. The entranceway terrace itself provides visitors with a panoramic view of the south elevation of the Robie House. Viñoly acknowledged that these elements of his design were intended to pay homage to Wright and his architectural vision.

New expanded tours and programs at the Robie House include guided tours with special themes designed to provide visitors with a deeper understanding of Wright's design intent and a more personal experience. The expanded Robie House experiences will highlight in-depth examinations of the museum and objects from the Preservation Trust collection as well as family workshops and social events.

The new Private Spaces In-Depth tour (\$45/\$55 per person) provides access to the entire building, including the kitchen, servants' wing and the third floor. The tour also allows guests to take interior photography. For the more casual observer the Robie House will continue to feature guided tours as well as a new self-guided experience to encourage visitors to walk freely through the awe-inspiring spaces (\$15 per person).

The new curatorial program, Engage with Artifacts (\$65/\$75 per person), provides rare insight into Wright's designs and allows participants to interact with the Preservation Trust curators and explore original artifacts. Led by a professional photographer, the Picturing Architecture tour (\$80/\$90 per person) facilitates the investigation of architecture through the use of photography.

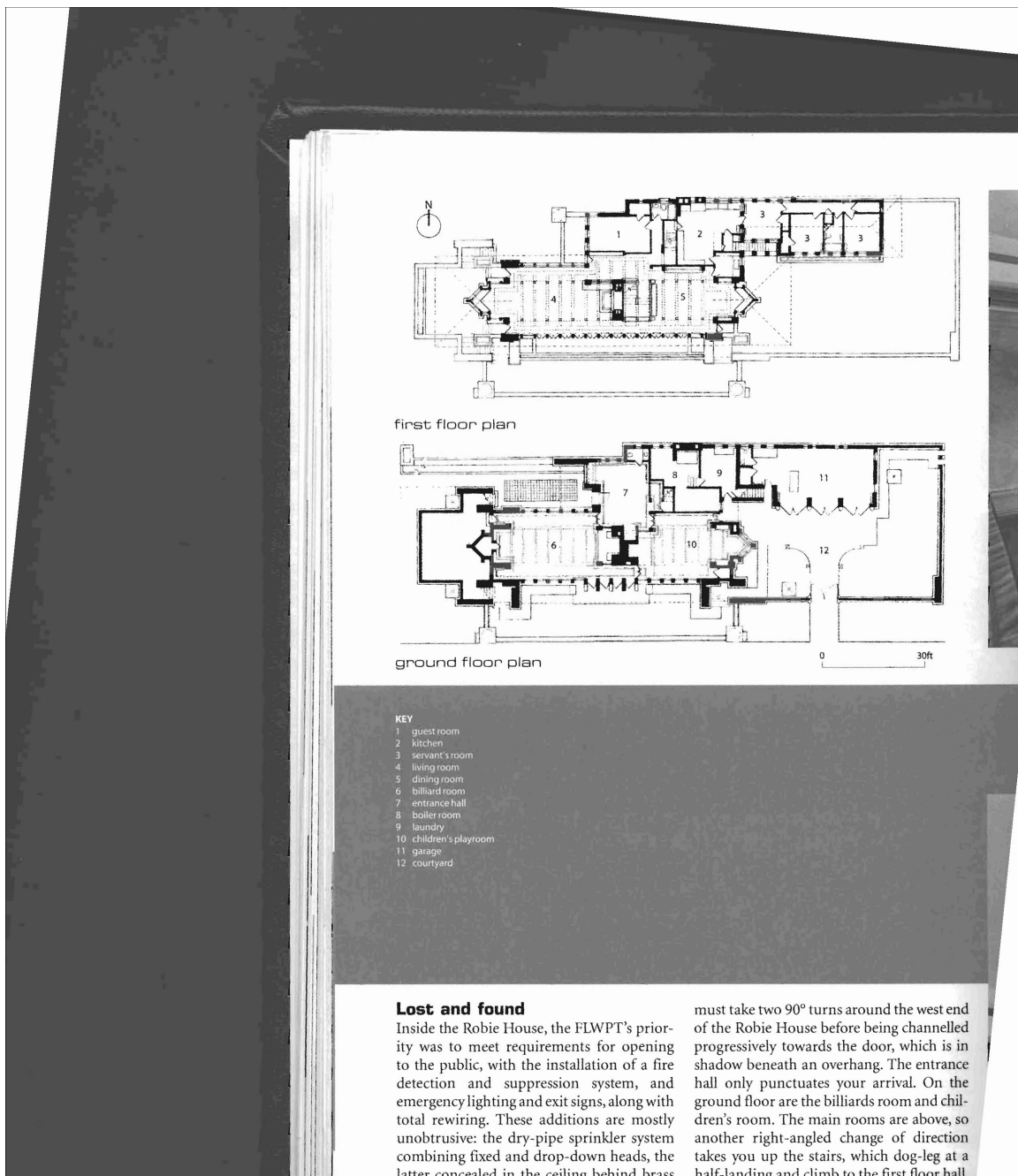
Family workshops at the Robie House engage younger audiences in exercises that encourage appreciation of design and architecture. Designed especially for young adults, the Redrawing Wright program (\$25/\$30 per person) helps students examine the home's revolutionary spaces as they engage in free exploration and creative drawing.

After Hours at Wright's Robie House events (\$30/\$35 per person) bring nightlife to one of Wright's most celebrated spaces as guests are treated to cocktails and hors d'oeuvres against a backdrop of spectacular art glass windows.

New programming for the icon of modern architecture will offer public access from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday through Monday from July through December 2009. Development of the revolutionary new model of a historic site museum will

culminate in the Robie House Centennial Celebration commencing in April 2010. Despite its new programming at the Robie House, the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust has not committed to a full restoration of the building, including Wright-designed furniture and textiles, as part of its long-range plan for the Robie House. In the fall of 2008, volunteer docents at the Robie House raised concerns over the Trust's unwillingness to commit itself to the full restoration of the building. Four volunteer docents were terminated by the Trust for their continued advocacy on behalf of the full restoration of the Robie House.

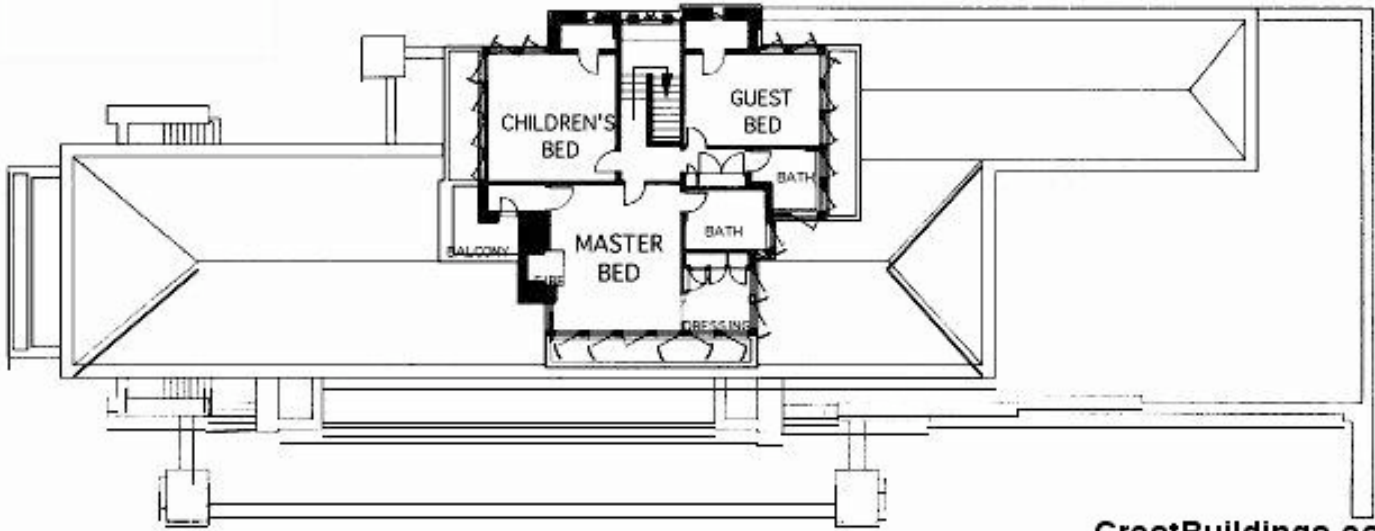
Scanned images from the dude:



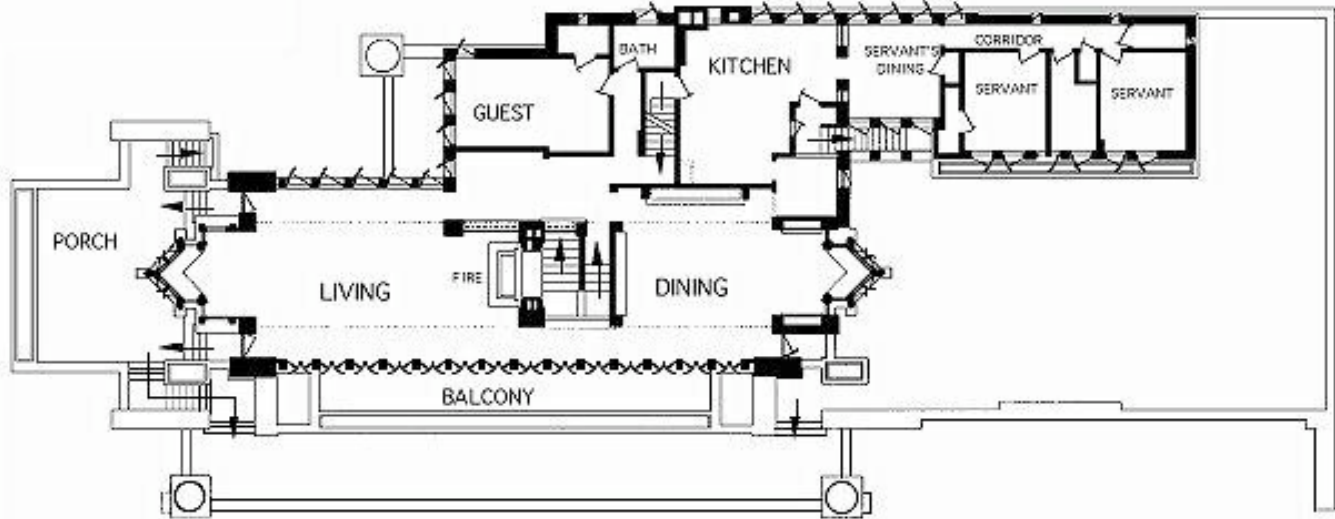
Lost and found

Inside the Robie House, the FLWPT's priority was to meet requirements for opening to the public, with the installation of a fire detection and suppression system, and emergency lighting and exit signs, along with total rewiring. These additions are mostly unobtrusive: the dry-pipe sprinkler system combining fixed and drop-down heads, the latter concealed in the ceiling behind brass

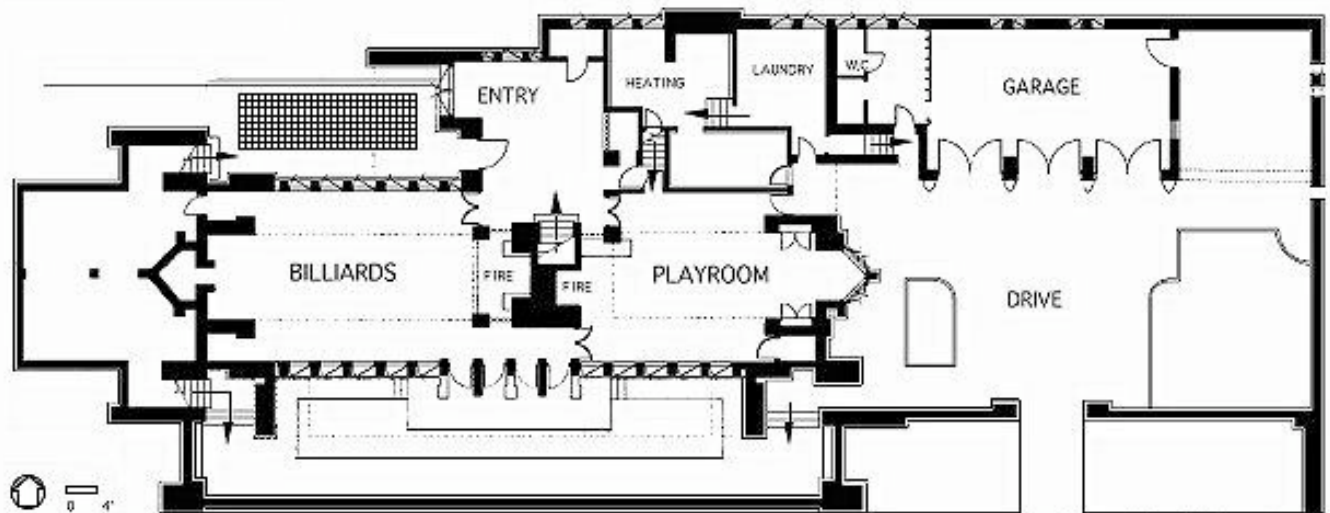
must take two 90° turns around the west end of the Robie House before being channelled progressively towards the door, which is in shadow beneath an overhang. The entrance hall only punctuates your arrival. On the ground floor are the billiards room and children's room. The main rooms are above, so another right-angled change of direction takes you up the stairs, which dog-leg at a half-landing and climb to the first floor hall,



GreatBuildings.com



GreatBuildings.com



GreatBuildings.com



http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Robie_Residence.html

Exterior Views:

Southwest Corner



West End



Northwest Corner

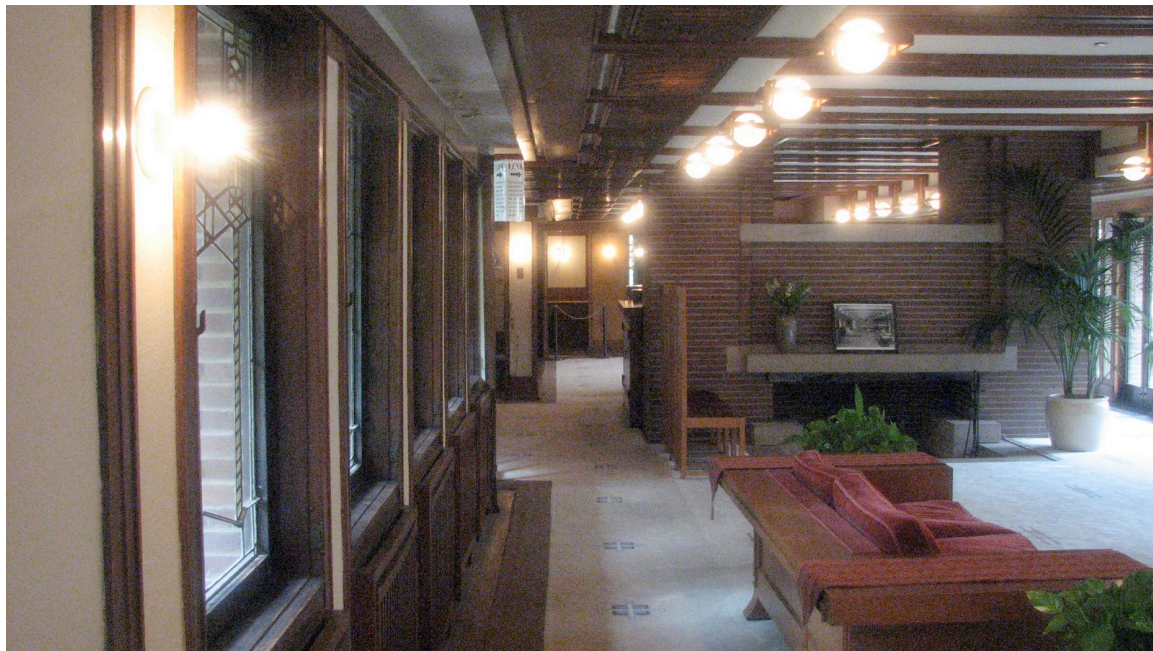


Southern Side

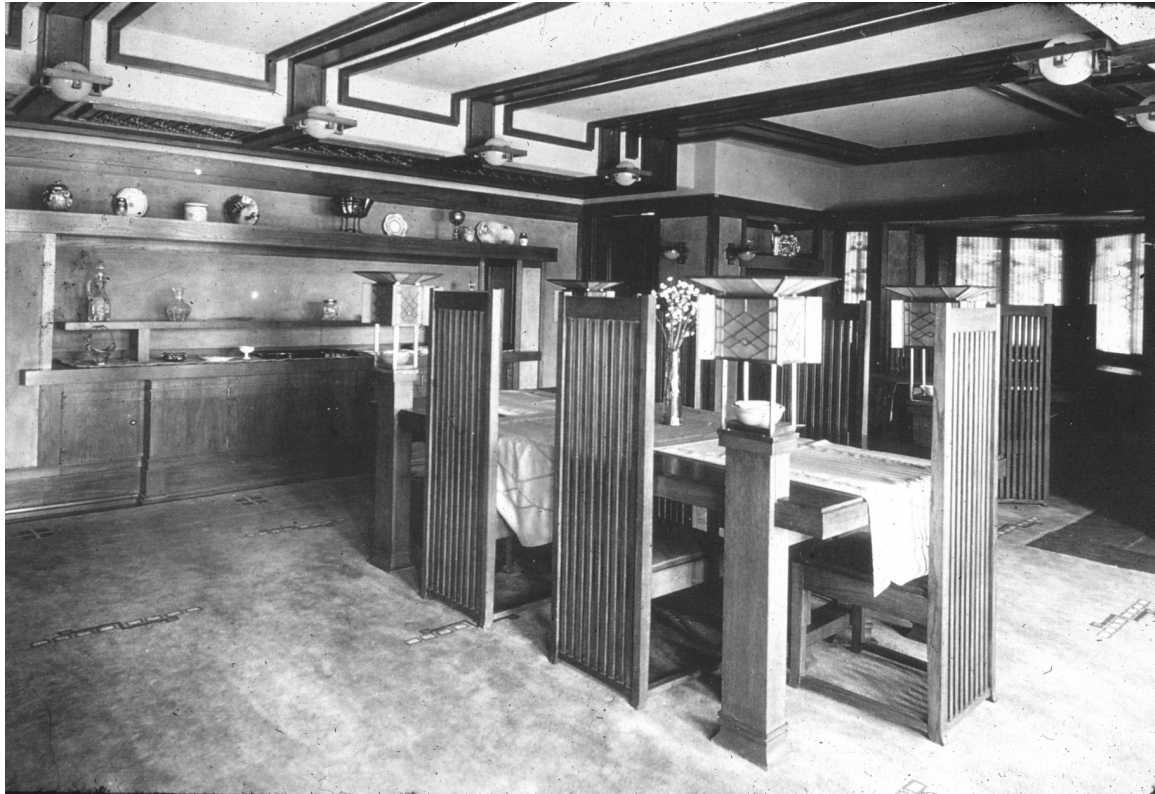


Interior Views:

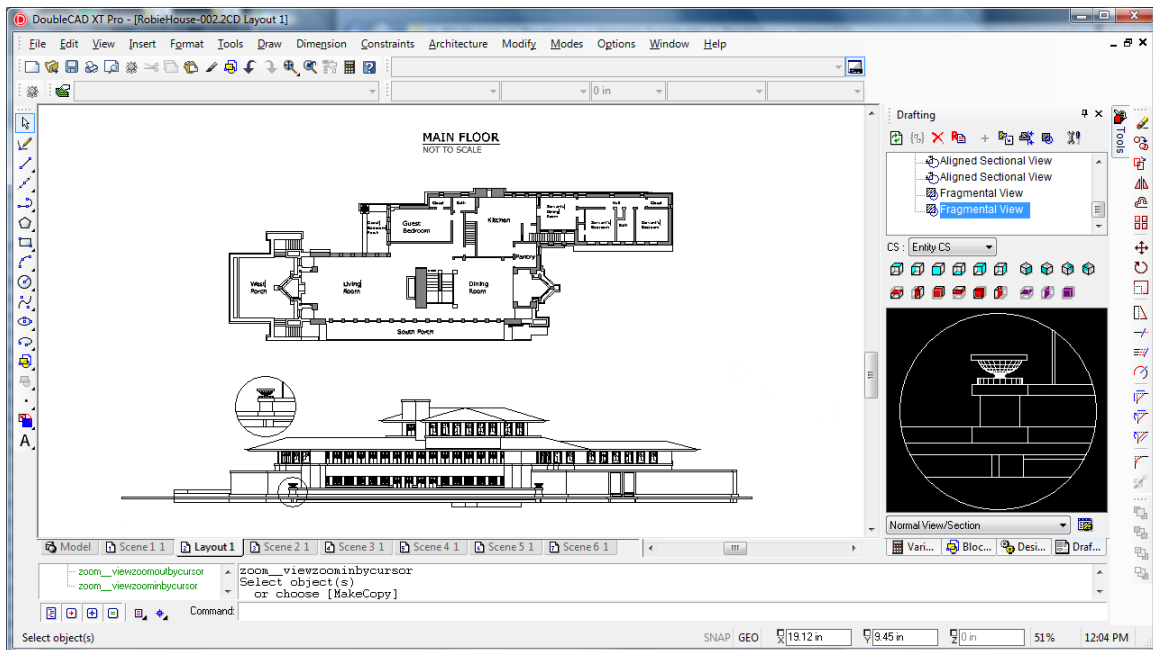
Main Hall

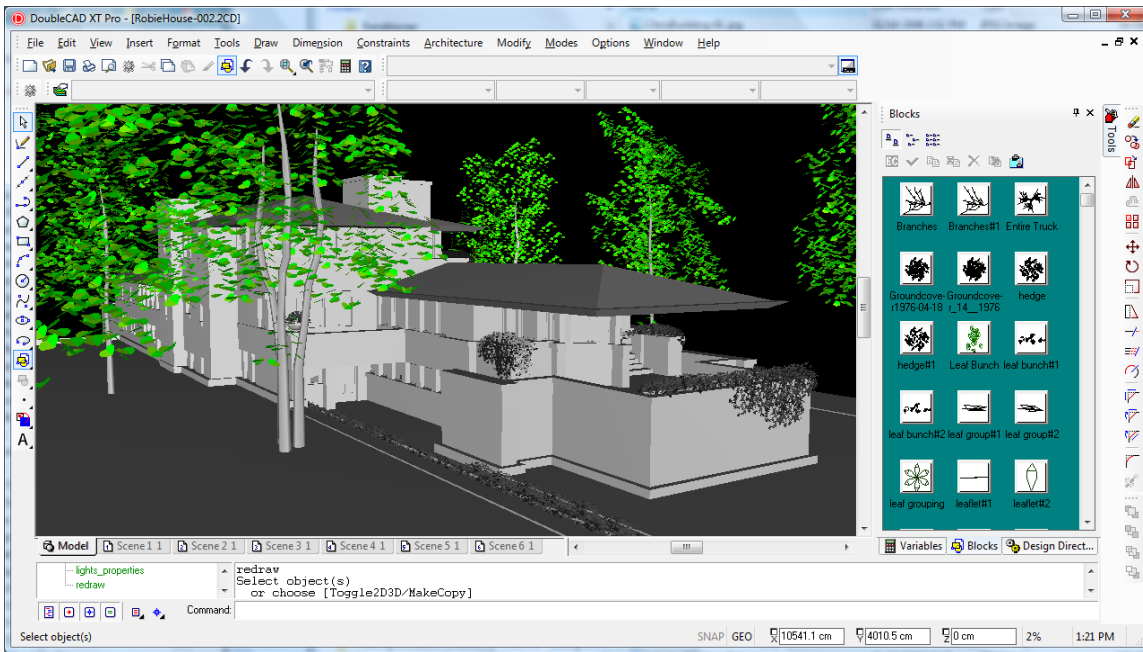


Dining Room



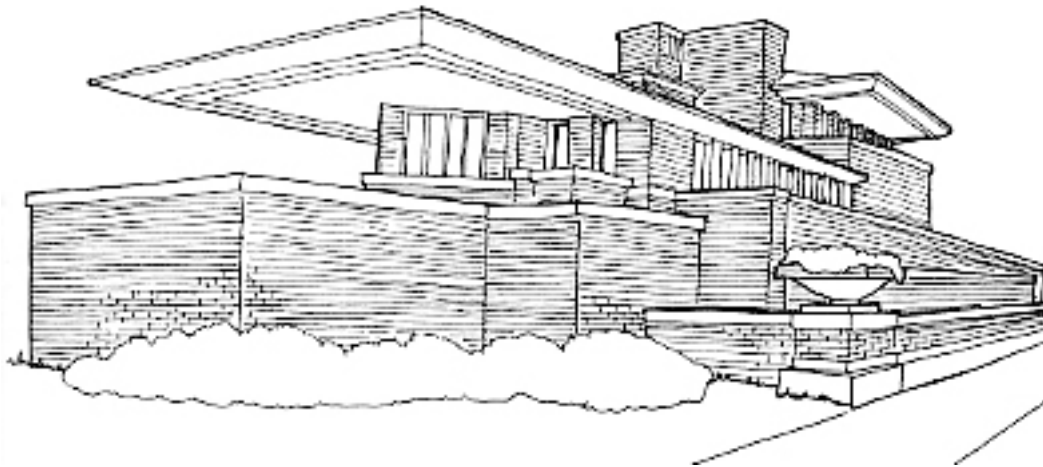
Computer Generated Images:



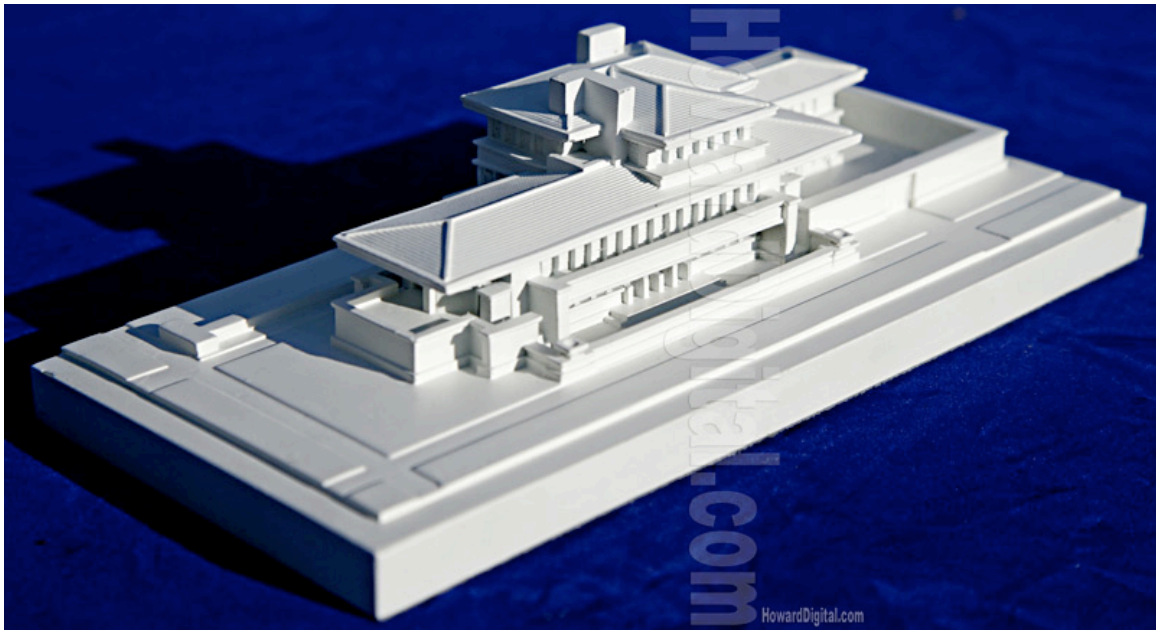


<http://www.doublecad.com/Portals/13/images/Pro/RobieHouse-Side-Floor-DP01.png>

Sketch:



Model:



<http://www.howardmodels.com/frank-lloyd-wright/robie-house/robie-house7.jpg>

