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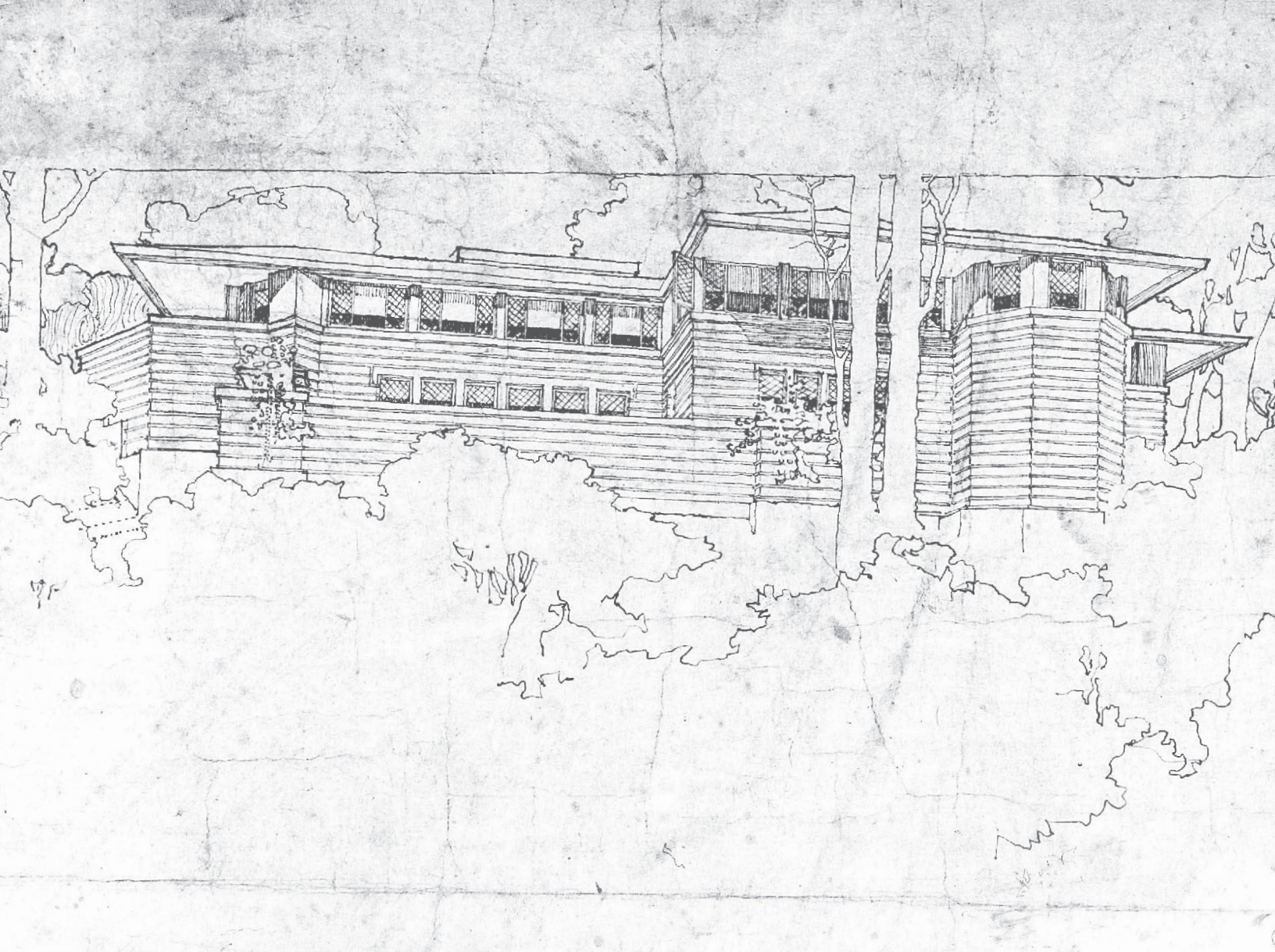
Drawings of a House: Reading Multiple Authorships in Architecture

John Knuteson



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by

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John Knuteson

Washington University in St. Louis
May 2020

To the readers.

Abstract

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John Knuteson
Master of Science in Architectural Studies
The History and Theory of Architecture
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Professor Igor Marjanovic, Chair

This thesis reconsiders the notion of authorship in architecture by examining the drawings, characters and stories surrounding the W.A. Glasner House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1906 and located in the Chicago suburb of Glencoe, Illinois. The house stands out in Wright's body of work as his first project to assimilate the dominant horizontality of the prairie style with complex topography, and for its unusual residential program. Perhaps more importantly, the process by which the Glasner House was designed, drawn and modified reveals a critical way of viewing authorship in architecture by introducing the contributions of multiple different characters. By examining the contributions of Wright, the architect; William and Cora Glasner, the original owners of the house; Marion Mahony, an important member of the design team; and Rudolph Nedved and Elizabeth Kimball Nedved, later the owners and themselves architects who modified the house, the thesis considers the multiplicity of authorships that shaped the house, the readerships that informed these authorships, and the diverse means by which these different characters constructed their own authorship. Due to the importance of drawing both in Wright's practice and the history of the Glasner House, the research uses drawings as tools to explore multiple mechanisms and records of authorship. Ultimately, the thesis proposes a definition of authorship in architecture that not only involves multiple agents, but is also dependent on readership, and encompasses many forms of engagement, including building, drawing, and lived experience.

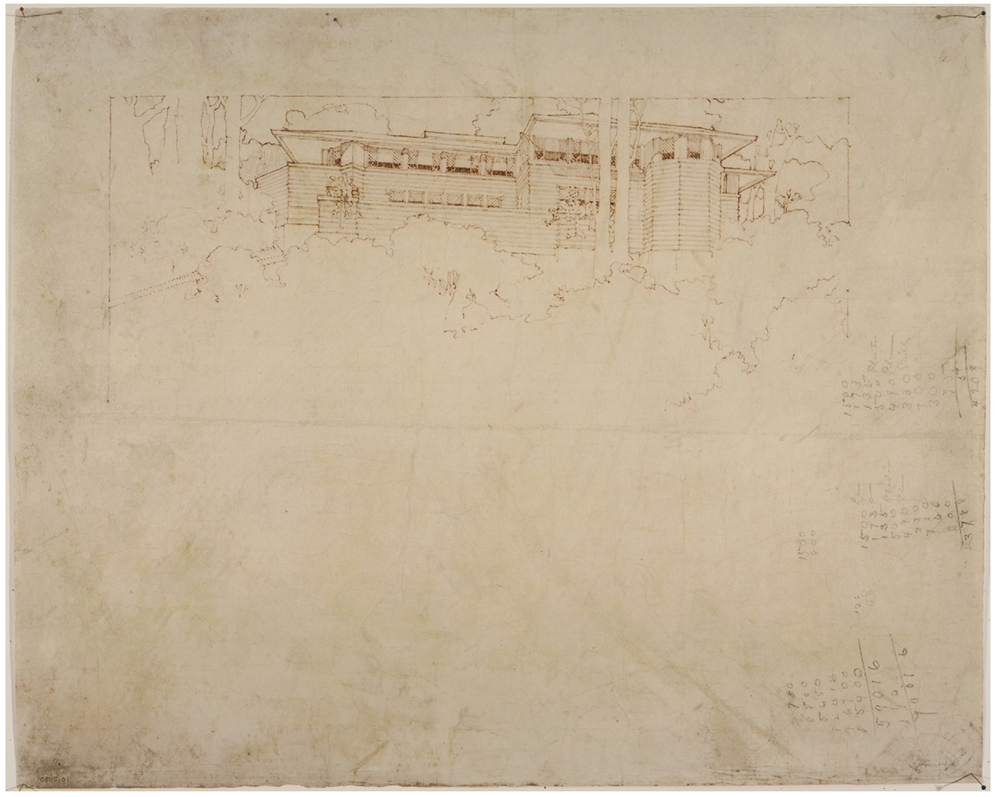


Figure i.1 – Perspective Working drawing of the Glasner House. Marion Mahony, delineator, n.d. (Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, New York, Series III, 0505.001.)

Introduction

This thesis opens with a drawing which, at first glance, seems somewhat unremarkable. It is informally drawn on trace paper, and depicts a modest house, pushed toward the upper edge of the page, partially obscured by slender tree trunks and flattened planes of foliage (fig. i.1). The trace paper appears fragile, having been wrinkled, smudged, and worn with age. Along the right side of the page, a series of handwritten numbers is scrawled sideways in three haphazard columns, perhaps the remnants of a hurried calculation.

The perimeter of the image is defined by a clear border on the top and sides. The lower extent is formed by the billowing tops of cloud-like bushes, which, combined with the position of the house at the top of the page, makes the house appear as though it is floating above the viewer. The blank region below leaves one to imagine that the landscape descends indefinitely off of the page.

This drawing was created by Marion Mahony: a prolific artist, designer, and one of Frank Lloyd Wright's most trusted employees. In 1894, Mahony was only the second woman to obtain a degree in architecture in the United States upon her graduation from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). She later was the first woman to become licensed as an architect in Illinois, after having been among the first to sit for the state licensure examination in 1896.[1]

Despite these individual achievements, Mahony is perhaps best known for the central role that she played in Wright's early practice as his chief draftsperson from 1895 until 1910. Today, she is most known for her architectural renderings in ink and watercolor, which visually merged architecture and landscape through the use of flat planes of color and delicate linework.

Those familiar with Mahony's refined, painterly rendering style, whose aesthetic has been

1 Paul Kruty, "Chicago 1900: The Griffins Come of Age," in *Beyond Architecture: Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin in America, Australia, and India* (Sydney: Powerhouse Publishing, 1998), p 17

compared to that of Japanese wood block prints, might at first be surprised by the rough and unfinished state of the trace paper drawing. There is no final version of this drawing from Mahony's hand, although a version of it did later appear in the *Wasmuth Portfolio*, the major monograph of Wright's work from his studio in Oak Park, published in Berlin in 1910. Yet, the beauty of the drawing even in its seemingly unfinished state invites curiosity as to what intentions and motives lie beneath the highly polished, curated representations of architecture often seen in exhibitions and publications.

Rough working drawings such as Mahony's reveal forms of authorship that usually go unnoticed in finished representations or built works of architecture. They provide visual indications of the characters, personalities, processes, and iterations that contribute to singular realized buildings.

This thesis will examine a house that engages multiple characters and forms of authorship. Despite the fact that it was designed by one of America's most famous modern architects, the house itself is not particularly famous, resulting in an interesting history of engagement by its multiple owners and inhabitants. The thesis aims to unearth the contributions of these various characters in order to gain a better understanding of the house and the multiple forms of authorship that have shaped it over time, and ultimately seeks to reframe the nature of authorship in architecture.

The House

The house pictured in Mahony's drawing is the W.A. Glasner House, designed by Wright between 1904 and 1906, and located in the Chicago suburb of Glencoe, Illinois. It was designed during some of the most productive years of Wright's Oak Park Studio, the period during which he was developing his prairie style - a formal language of low, horizontal masses, natural materials, planar geometries, and fluid interior spatial relationships – characteristics which also define the architecture of the Glasner House. Still, several important anomalies separate the Glasner House from Wright's other Prairie Style homes. Historians have acknowledged the house's unusual siting and handling of topography, a feature that would

Figure i.2. The W.A. Glasner House, Glencoe, Illinois. Frank Lloyd Wright, 1906. View from driveway. Photograph by author.

Figure i.3 – The W.A. Glasner House. View from bridge crossing the ravine (Sheridan Road) looking southwest. Photograph by author.

define Wright's later work.[2] Rather than being situated on the flat portion of its one-acre site, the Glasner House is placed on the very edge of a steep ravine. The house at first appears to be a simple, single-story bungalow from the driveway entrance to the South. By contrast, the North side of the house (the one shown in Mahony's drawing) projects into the ravine in a series of stepping vertical volumes that descend to keep pace with the sloping terrain.[3] This situation helps to explain the apparent weightlessness of the house in Mahony's drawing. One can see that it is a reaction to the gravity of the ravine, the two forces precariously counterbalancing one another within the composition (figs. i.2-i.3).

The Glasner House is also often acknowledged in Wright's body of work for its unusual residential program, at least for its time, by excluding a formal dining room. This was one of the ways in which Wright was beginning to experiment with different concepts of domesticity, partially in response to his progressive clientele. In fact, the Glasner House's spatial flexibility, paired with other factors such as its economical construction and use of board-and-batten cladding, foreshadow Wright's later work of the 1930's. [4]

For the purpose of this thesis, the Glasner House provides a compelling backdrop against which to consider the notion of authorship in architecture for two significant reasons. The first reason, as previously mentioned, is that compared to Wright's more historically noteworthy Prairie Style homes, the Glasner House has not attracted the same level of scrutiny. This invites more characters into an active dialogue with the architecture. Wright's Prairie Style masterpieces, such as the famous Robie House in Hyde Park, Chicago, have become icons of modern architecture. The Glasner House, on the other hand, maintains a certain level of anonymity that more readily permits adaptation and modification: its architecture is more flexible, more dynamic, and more reflective of its inhabitants.

The second reason is that the Glasner House is a dwelling - the most personal and intimate of buildings; consequently, the ways in which different characters have interacted with the house are highly personal. Wright designed the house according to principles of spatial plasticity and integration into the landscape. However, the thesis will also consider others who engaged the house through inhabitation, drawing, and modification of the landscape, and how these forms of engagement help to define their authorship.

The Drawings

One of the most intriguing aspects of the Glasner House, besides its site and its approach to domestic program, is the process by which it was drawn and re-drawn. Mahony's trace paper drawing appeared at a time when drawing was a major focus of the activity in Wright's studio, and the rendering style that would be most closely associated with the prairie houses was actively evolving. Several qualities of the drawing, such as the informality of the trace paper and the numbers along the side of the page, suggest that it was never intended to be finished, but instead was a working drawing, indicative of an intermediate stage in which Mahony was developing the final composition (fig. i.4). A surviving tracing of a rendering of the Glasner house suggests that the drawing was perhaps destined to be traced over in a future iteration, as was a common practice in Wright's office at the time.[5] (fig. i.5).

2 See Henry Russell Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials, 1887-1941: The Buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1942), p 47; Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p 50; Charles E. Aguar and Berdeana Aguar, *Wrightscapes: Frank Lloyd Wright's Landscape Designs* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), p 100-101.

3 According to the Glasner House's historic registry application, the sort of dramatic terrain found at the Glasner House site was a first for Wright at the time of the house's construction, and a feature that would later be echoed at Fallingwater in 1935. National Register of Historic Places, William A. Glasner House, Glencoe, Cook County, Illinois, National Register # 05000105.

4 See Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.84, 92.

5 H. Allen Brooks has established that tracing was the primary drawing method employed in the *Wasmuth Portfolio*, the landmark monograph of Wright's work published in 1910. Both photographs and drawings were used as underlays. H. Allen Brooks, "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Wasmuth Drawings," *The Art Bulletin* 48, no. 2 (1966).

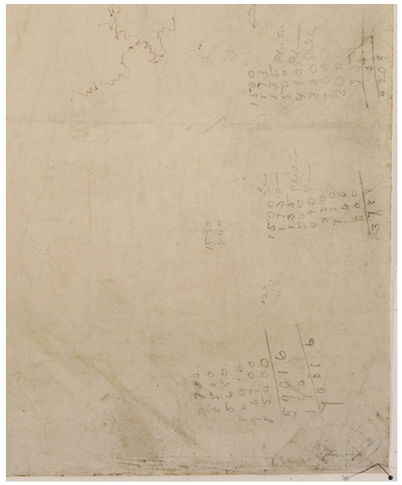


Figure i.4. Perspective Working drawing of the Glasner House, Detail. Marion Mahony, delineator, n.d. (Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, New York, Series III, 0505.001.)

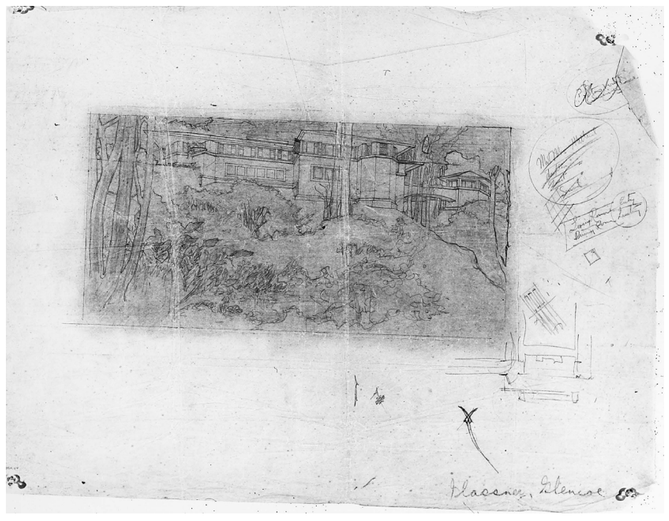


Figure i.5 – Traced perspective drawing of the Glasner House. n.d. (Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, Avery Architectural & Final Arts Library, New York, Series III, 0505.004.)

As it turns out, Mahony's drawing has two siblings: a 1905 watercolor by Louis Rasmussen, a Chicago renderer whom Wright sometimes hired on a contract basis (fig. i.6), and another version that appeared in an August 1906 issue of the *House Beautiful*, from the hand of yet another draftsman: Harry Robinson, a young employee in Wright's studio at the time (fig. i.7). Each appears to be taken from the same station point and angle, from beneath the house at the bottom of the ravine – a position that emphasizes the emergence of the house from the landscape and reinforces the horizontality of the architecture.

The three drawings parallel the authorships constructed through the physical modification of the house. Through drawing, each of these artists also made slight modifications to the architecture and the environment in which it sits. Subsequently, the three drawings also engage an important aspect of authorship by revealing different readerships of the house. In re-drawing the house from the same position and angle, each artist considered not only the architecture, but also the other drawings. The act of re-drawing suggests a sort of active, re-creative readership that also begets authorship.

The different representations of the Glasner House reflect the importance of drawing as a mechanism of authorship in architecture. Not only is drawing an important generative tool; it is also a re-generative tool, which can be used to refine, edit, and critique. Authorship via drawing is an important aspect of authorship in the field of architecture, revealing the nuances of readership and opening up additional means by which authorship can be constructed.

Authorship

The things that make the Glasner House unique: its program, relationship to site, and the way in which it was drawn, invite us to question the nature of authorship in architecture. These three critical aspects of the house are important in showing that authorship is a complex and dynamic process that is engaged by multiple agents through various different mechanisms.

In the 1960's and 1970's, the idea of authorship began to be questioned in conjunction with developments in postmodern literature. Although this discourse occurred nearly fifty years after the timeline of the thesis, the concepts

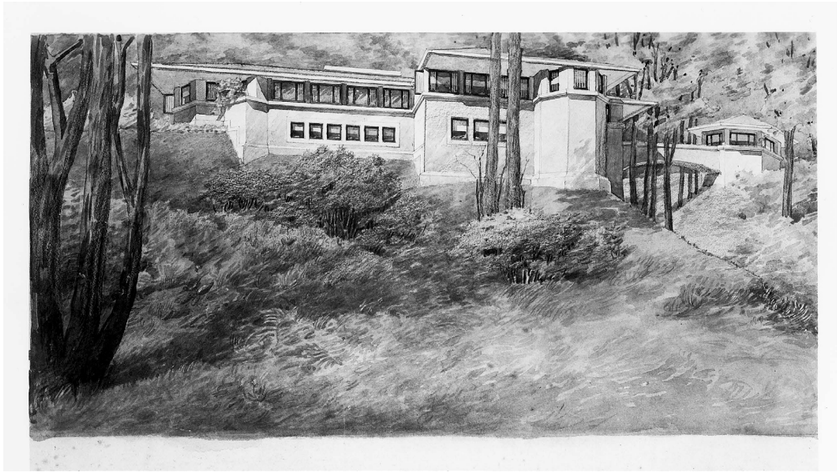


Figure i.6 – Perspective rendering of the Glasner House. Louis Rasmussen, delineator, n.d. Watercolor on paper. (Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, Avery Architectural & Final Arts Library, New York, Series III, 0505.002.)

Figure i.7 – Perspective drawing of the Glasner House published in *House Beautiful*. Harry Robinson, delineator, n.d. (*House Beautiful*, June 1906.)

that emerged from it are highly relevant to the sort of authorship dynamic that I am proposing.

One of the key exponents of this discourse was the French philosopher Roland Barthes. The first figure to question the function of the author in his 1967 essay, "The Death of the Author," Barthes concluded that, "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author."[6] This conclusion underscores the agency of readership. Barthes argued that the interpretation of the reader, rather than the intention of the writer, is what creates the meaning of a text. Thus, the reader is promoted from passive observer to active producer, and the voice of the author becomes merely "an instance [of] writing."[7] Instead, it is language that speaks. While deemphasizing the status of the author, the Barthes' structure also implies the plurality of readership. In fact, Barthes positions the text as a singular albeit "multi-dimensional" theoretical space in which multiple readings (meanings) confront one another.[8]

The transaction between authorship and readership originally proposed by Barthes was later elaborated and more directly applied by the literary critic George Steiner. Just as Barthes questioned the status of the author, Steiner considered the status of the text. One might consider Steiner's hypothesis in "Text and Context" (1975):

> And yet, at some level of provisional trust, we do know, we must know what we mean by discriminating between 'print' and 'text,' between 'books' as a pragmatic counter and 'the book' as the executive medium of 'the textual.' Such knowledge, such rational intuition, draws on key correlatives of disinterestedness, of semantic level, of the contract of expectation and response as negotiated, usually unconsciously, between writer and reader (or reader yet to be because the writing is there). The precise determination of these correlatives would be both a history of culture and of serious reading. It might lead to a short-hand recognition or working hypothesis: a 'text' is generated where the reader is one who

6 Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), p 148.

7 Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), p 145.

8 Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), p 146.

> rationally conceives of himself as writing a 'text' comparable in stature, in degree of demand, to that which he is reading.[9]

In this passage, Steiner suggests that the act of reading also entails a re-writing, so to speak, of what has been posited through the original act of writing. It is only in this act of re-creation that writing is elevated to the textual.

While Barthes and Steiner are fundamentally different in their applications, the former philosophical, the latter literary, both acknowledge that the reader serves as an existential basis for a text as a determiner of both its meaning and its status. The thesis will participate in this discussion by translating these concepts from language and literature into the domain of space and architecture.

In addition to the architect, this thesis will consider the authorships of several additional characters: the Glasners – the original clients; Mahony – Wright's associate who drew the house; and the Nedveds – the second owners of the house who adapted the architecture and landscape. Considering the theoretical frameworks of Barthes and Steiner, the multiplicity of authorships present in the history of the Glasner House also urges us to examine its various readerships. Consequently, the chapters will consider both how the Glasner House was read from the various authors' perspectives, and how these readings informed their authorships.

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis seeks to open up an idea of authorship that involves multiple different authors and is constructed through different mechanisms, including building, drawing, inhabitation, and modification. To this end, the chapters will begin by calling into question a more conventional definition of authorship in architecture, and subsequently will examine more specific instances of authorship in the case of the Glasner House.

Chapter One examines the authorship of Wright in what is perhaps the more conventional and historical sense, as an author of modern American architecture. Wright has secured a reputation as a formative figure in modern architecture through his innovation of form and space and espousal of an "organic architecture." This idea has been bolstered by a carefully curated body of work, encompassing not only built projects, but also engagement with theory, drawings, and publications. The chapter will explore Wright's contributions to modern architecture, and the mechanisms through which he constructed his historical authorship.

Chapter Two considers the specific propositions posited by Wright as one of multiple authors of the Glasner House. These consisted of firm stances on the house's relationship to the landscape, its spatial organization, and the way in which it was drawn. These ideas are consistent in Wright's work and have come to be associated with his authorship. However, they were also ideas that others engaged critically in their own authorships of the house.

Chapter Three considers the authorship of the original clients of the Glasner House. In many of his early projects, Wright worked with progressive clients whom he engaged in critical dialogue. This allowed the clients of the prairie houses to claim an active role in the development of Wright's revolutionary residential architecture. Subsequently, the Glasners asserted progressive ideas regarding domesticity that heavily influenced the plan of the house. In particular, this chapter will explore the authorship of Cora Glasner as a primary voice in the development of the design.

Chapter Four looks at Wright's practice around the time that the Glasner House was designed, and the contributions of his associates, who unlike the apprentices of Wright's later career, were his professional equals. The chapter explores the authorship of Mahony, whose ability to inhabit the site through drawing informed her authorship, which created an atmosphere based on the Glasner House's relationship to its landscape. This narrative derived from Mahony's experiences with nature; its centrality to her beliefs regarding education and spirituality; and her ability to "draw" drama from the natural features of a landscape, which was demonstrated repeatedly throughout her career in her architectural drawings and renderings.

Chapter Five examines the authorship of the second owners of the house, Elizabeth Kimball

9 George Steiner, "Text and Context," *Salmagundi*, no. 31/32 (1975), p 176.

Nedved and Rudolph Nedved. Although they were not involved in the initial design and construction of the Glasner House, the Nedveds engaged in a critical dialogue with Wright's assertions on the relationship of the house to the landscape. This arose from the Nedveds' reluctance to allow Wright to dictate how they inhabited the house and was expressed in their physical manipulations of the landscape. The Nedveds' modifications repositioned the house in the landscape, embodying their picturesque views on landscape design and reflecting Elizabeth Kimball Nedved's approach to drawing, composition, and framing.

These varied accounts, which span over sixty years but are connected by a single place, lead to an idea of authorship in architecture that belongs to more than just one person, is heavily dependent on readership, and is constructed through various different means. By looking at the personal stories of the characters who engaged with the house through authorship, and by examining drawings as a fundamental research methodology, the thesis aims to discover new insights into the mechanisms of authorship in architecture.

Chapter 1

Authoring the Organic: Frank Lloyd Wright's Historical Authorship

In modern American architecture, perhaps no one figure is more historically prominent than Frank Lloyd Wright. He was a formative figure, often considered part of a triad of architects, along with Henry Hobson Richardson and Louis Sullivan, that catalyzed the onset of modernism in the United States around the turn of the twentieth century. The following chapter will consider how Wright helped to author modernism through the genre of "organic architecture" in the United States, and the means used by Wright to cement his own historical authorship.

Architectural Career

Wright was born in Richland Center, Wisconsin in 1867. Because his family could not afford him a formal architectural education, Wright began his training in Civil Engineering from the University of Wisconsin, where he attended from 1886 to 1887, eventually dropping out to pursue apprenticeships in architectural offices in Chicago.[10] Wright worked first under Joseph Lyman Silsbee, an architect known for his work in the residential shingle style, and then as an apprentice in the office of Adler & Sullivan.

Wright's independent career can be roughly divided into two periods, the earliest of which began with the establishment of his practice in 1893 and lasted until roughly the mid-1920's, followed by a creative resurgence in the 1930's that lasted until his death in 1959. The earlier period encompassed the well-known prairie style, a pursuit of an indigenous, midwestern architectural style that distanced itself from the eclectic, historicist sensibilities of the East Coast architectural elite by embracing the landscape of the midwestern plains. While Wright is historically considered the front runner of the style, he was actually one of several regional architects who operated in the same

10 Frank Lloyd Wright, *Frank Lloyd Wright: An Autobiography*, 1st ed (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1943), pp 51-60.

Figure 1.1. Maples at Mamma. Utagawa Hiroshige, c. 1856-1858, Color woodblock print. Wriston Art Center Galleries, Lawrence University, Appleton, Wisconsin. (https://library-artstor-org.libproxy.wustl.edu/asset/SS7731421_7731421_11728606.)

style in the early years of the twentieth century prior to World War I, collectively termed the "Prairie School."[11] The architecture of the Prairie School was characterized by horizontal formal articulation, fluid spatial relationships facilitated by intersecting volumes and sprawling, meandering floor plans, and the reverence of nature. This last principle was manifested both in the honest treatment of building materials, usually wood, stucco, or brick (the latter with an overwhelming emphasis on its intrinsic horizontality), and the use of natural motifs in architectural ornament.

The major project of Wright's later work was the development of the Usonian House, a term partially coined by Wright (literally derived from the acronym of the "United States of North America") to define a style that catered more to the needs of middle-class Americans than those of wealthy clients. While maintaining the spatial plasticity of the prairie style homes, Usonian Houses used more economical materials, most often brick or board-and-batten siding, and were more compact, excising spaces perceived as superfluous to modernized American life, such as dining rooms and other formal spaces.[12] The Usonian Houses were also more ambitious in their engagement of site and topography. While the geographical domain of the Prairie Style was largely constrained to Chicago and its suburbs, Usonian Houses were built throughout the continental United States, engaging a range of different environments and landscapes.

Wright's career, which spanned seven decades, and his vast body of work left an enduring mark on the American architectural landscape. His work helped to define a unique American architectural expression, and also inspired a burgeoning generation of European Modernists, extending Wright's influence internationally. The breadth of his work and length of his career is matched by his historical stature.

11 H. Allen Brooks, *The Prairie School; Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwest Contemporaries* ([Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972). pp 3-13.

12 Frank Lloyd Wright, "The House of Moderate Cost," in *Frank Lloyd Wright: Essential Texts*, ed. Robert Twombly (New York, London: W. W. Norton, 2009), p 279.

Reputation

Wright now enjoys an almost deified historical status, recognized as a household name even outside of the profession. His reputation today seems to be a matter of historical fact, yet it was built gradually over the course of his long career and up to the present day.

Until 1910, Wright's work was for the most part focused on the American Midwest and centered in Chicago. He was frequently featured in local exhibitions with organizations such as the Chicago Architectural Club, earning him a regional reputation, with growing national recognition, thanks to features in architectural journals. [13] However, some of Wright's earliest work was published in the nascent form of the home journal, like Chicago's *House Beautiful*, in the late nineteenth century, extending his influence into the home as well as critical circles.[14]

In 1910, the *Wasmuth Portfolio*, the first monograph of Wright's work, was published in Berlin, expanding his influence overseas. Historians have noted how this portfolio made an impression on architects such as Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier.[15] At the same time, Wright's life was embroiled in scandal, after having left his family in Oak Park and eloped to Europe with Mamah Borthwick Cheney, the wife of a client. This affair made Wright's personal life a matter of public interest, as he increasingly became the subject of newspaper headlines.[16]

13 Kathryn Smith, *Wright on Exhibit: Frank Lloyd Wright's Architectural Exhibitions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 1-39.

14 H. Allen Brooks, *The Prairie School; Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwest Contemporaries* ([Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p 24.

15 Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier were all working in the office of Peter Behrens in Berlin at the time the portfolio was published. See Nikolaus Pevsner, "Frank Lloyd Wright's Peaceful Penetration of Europe," *Architects' Journal* 89 (1939): 731–34; and Paul Venable Turner, "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Young Le Corbusier," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 42, no. 4 (1983): 350–59, https://doi.org/10.2307/989921.

16 Several articles published in the *Chicago Tribune* in 1911 are indicative of the coverage Wright's personal life received. See "Spend Christmas Making 'Defense' of 'Spirit Hegira'," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922); Chicago, Ill., December 26, 1911; "Wright Reveals Romance Secret," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922); Chicago, Ill., December 31, 1911.

After a mid-career slump due to the damaging effects of his affair with Cheney, public interest in Wright's work was again boosted by a series of public exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) between 1932 and 1953, the years that also produced some of Wright's most iconic projects, such as Fallingwater in Mill Run, Pennsylvania (1935), and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, New York (1943-1960). Kathryn Smith has identified no fewer than twenty-six MoMA-sponsored exhibitions that featured the work of Wright within these years. Six of these were dedicated solely to Wright's work.[17] This means that, at the time when Wright's career was at its peak, he had established himself as a public celebrity and recognized artist as well as an acclaimed architect. Of particular interest during this period was *The Work of Frank Lloyd Wright: In the Nature of Materials*, a large-scale exhibition mounted in 1940 at the MoMA in New York. As Smith notes, this exhibition assembled a vast collection of drawings from each stage in Wright's career, showing a continuity of graphic development in his work - from the prairie house projects produced in the Oak Park Studio, to later Usonian projects drawn at Taliesin.[18]

Wright's reputation has only continued to increase after his death in 1959. Vincent Scully was the first to document his career in its entirety in 1960.[19] Since then, numerous publications have been dedicated to his life and work, approached from varying historical, theoretical, and critical angles.

Wright's influence and towering reputation have led to various metaphors, including that of a "holy trinity" as described by James O'Gorman in *Three American Architects: Richardson, Sullivan, and Wright* (1991). This metaphor groups Wright with Sullivan and Richardson as the critical figures in defining American architecture as independent from foreign styles, with Wright occupying the last stage in the push from historicism to modernism.[20] Richardson and Sullivan were both among the first Americans to be trained at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Richardson in the late 1850's and Sullivan for one year in 1874. Wright, the youngest of the three, received no formal training and was therefore shielded from the pressures of European academicism in his work, instead learning the art of building first-hand through his apprenticeships with Silsbee and Sullivan. Wright's espousal of "organic architecture" resulted in a complete integration of the functionalist theory that Sullivan had advocated. Interestingly, Wright did not consider himself a modernist, and at the end of his career was an opponent of the International Style.[21] Instead, Wright was positioned as a pioneer and champion of a purely American architecture. Wright himself helped to secure this image through an engagement with theory, drawings, and publications that underpinned his architectural innovation.

Organic Architecture

Throughout his career, Wright was active in theoretical debates on architectural aesthetics, the function of architecture in society, and the state of the profession. Before the most prolific years of the Oak Park Studio in the mid-1900's, Wright's theorizations on architecture played an important role in making him known to the public. H. Allen Brooks notes that the basis of Wright's milieu in which his design philosophy was established were the young architects who practiced out of Steinway Hall, which in addition to Wright, consisted of Dwight H. Perkins, Myron Hunt, and Robert C. Spencer. This was the group that would later form the Prairie School.

17 Kathryn Smith, *Wright on Exhibit: Frank Lloyd Wright's Architectural Exhibitions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), p 109.

18 Kathryn Smith, *Wright on Exhibit: Frank Lloyd Wright's Architectural Exhibitions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), p 139.

19 Vincent Joseph Scully, Frank Lloyd Wright (New York, G. Braziller, 1960), http://archive.org/details/franklloydwright00scul.

20 O'Gorman credits Lewis Mumford with first recognizing the relationship between the work of Richardson, Sullivan, and Wright in *The Brown Decades* (1931). James F. O'Gorman. *Three American Architects : Richardson, Sullivan, and Wright*, 1865-1915 (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1991), http://archive.org/details/threeamericanarc00jame, p xv.

21 Frank Lloyd Wright, "Acceptance Speech of Frank Lloyd Wright," in *Frank Lloyd Wright: Essential Texts*, ed. Robert Twombly (New York, London: W. W. Norton, 2009), p 291.

These architects and their colleagues frequently gathered in a group known as "the eighteen" to discuss their views on architecture, which were based heavily on the organic-functionalist ideas of Sullivan.[22]

Outside of practice, Wright and his Steinway colleagues were also involved in several other activities and organizations. Wright was not a member but was actively involved with the Chicago Architectural Club and the Architectural League of America. Both were organizations dedicated to intellectually enriching lectures, exhibitions, and conventions geared toward young draftsmen. At the second annual convention of the Architectural League of America, held in Chicago, Wright delivered one of his first significant lectures, titled "The Architect," in which he called his peers to action in recognizing the importance of studying nature and understanding the underlying principles beneath established forms:

> The architect primarily should have something of his own to say, or keep silence…If he has something to say in noble form, gracious line, and living color, each expression will have a "grammar" of its own, using the term in its best sense, and will speak the universal language of Beauty in no circumscribed series of set architectural phrase as used by people in other times, although a language in harmony with elemental laws to be deduced from the beautiful of all peoples in all time.
>
> This elemental law and order of the beautiful is as much more profound than the accepted grammatical of phrase in architecture as Nature is deeper than Fashion.[23]

Here, Wright asserts his belief in the importance of original authorship in architecture, or that "The architect primarily should have something of his own to say." This, he argues, arises from a thorough acquaintance with the natural laws that govern beauty and harmony.

Wright continued to lecture and publish articles throughout the Oak Park Studio years. In 1908, his article, "In the Cause of Architecture," appeared in *The Architectural Record*, which synthesized many of the design philosophies he had developed over the past decade, including those expressed in "The Architect" and his famous address, "The Art and Craft of the Machine," delivered in front of the Arts and Crafts Society of Chicago in 1901. The major themes of the article are the guidance of nature in design, from ground plan to elevation and ornamental motifs, and the possibilities of the machine in developing an organic expression. The unpretentiousness of looking to nature for design inspiration, paired with the optimistic integration of the machine, seem to indicate that Wright was aware of his generation's pivotal position in history as historicism gave way to modernism. Wright himself states:

> Radical though it be, the work here illustrated is dedicated to a cause conservative in the best sense of the word. At no point does it involve denial of the elemental law and order inherent in all great architecture; rather, is it a declaration of love for the spirit of that law and order, and a reverential recognition of the elements that made its ancient letter in its time vital and beautiful.[24]

The positions set forth in Wright's speeches and writings help to frame a set of formal principles that guided Wright's design work. Foremost among these is the idea of "organic architecture," which embodied Wright's views on material and formal integrity. In practice, this involved a careful integration of the building into its natural environment, so that architecture and site became parts of a harmonious, organic whole:

> A building should appear to grow easily from its site and be shaped to harmonize with its surroundings if Nature is manifest there, and if not try to make it as quiet, substantial and organic as She would have been were the opportunity Hers.[25]

The idea of organicism informed the interior space of the building as much as it did the exterior. According to Wright, "buildings are the background or framework for the human life within their walls and a foil for the nature efflorescence without,"[26] therefore, the interior organization of a house and its exterior expression were part and parcel of a holistic organic design:

22 H. Allen Brooks, "Steinway Hall, Architects and Dreams," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 22, no. 3 (1963): 171–75, https://doi.org/10.2307/988228, p 171-172.

23 Frank Lloyd Wright, "The Architect," *The Brickbuilder* 9, no. 6 (June 1900), p 127.

24 Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture," *The Architectural Record* XXIII, no. 3 (March 1908), p 155.

25 Ibid., p 157.

26 Ibid., p 162.

> I have endeavored in this work to establish a harmonious relationship between ground plan and elevation of these buildings, considering the one as a solution and the other an expression of the conditions of a problem of which the whole is a project. I have tried to establish an organic integrity to begin with, forming the basis for the subsequent working out of a significant grammatical expression and making the whole, as nearly as I could, consistent.[27]

For Wright, organic simplicity also implied plasticity, which he elaborated by stating, "In my work the idea of plasticity may now be seen as the element of continuity."[28] This principle is most evident in the flowing, meandering floor plans of the prairie houses, which often merged and overlapped spaces that were conventionally separated, resulting in a harmonious composition of continuous enclosed space:

> …I declared the whole lower floor as one room, cutting off the kitchen as a laboratory, putting the servants' sleeping and living quarters next to the kitchen but semi-detached, on the ground floor. Then I screened various portions of the big room for certain domestic purposes like dining, reading, receiving callers…The house became more free as space and more livable too. Interior spaciousness began to dawn… The sense of the whole broadened, made plastic by this means.[29]

The idea of "organic architecture" would be one of Wright's most enduring legacies in American architecture. It was a leading principle of the Prairie School that revolutionized the conception of dwellings and domestic space. Beyond the prairie houses, it recurred again in his Usonian work of the 1930's, and its principles define some of his most significant projects, such as Taliesin and Fallingwater, making it a common thread that runs throughout his vast body of work.

The Role of Drawings

One of the continuing areas of interest in Wright's work is his drawings. The 1940 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art had demonstrated the continuity of drawing in Wright's work, and three years after his death, the MoMA mounted another extensive exhibition of his drawings, pulled from the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, accompanied by a printed catalogue.[30] In 1977, the *Selected Drawings Portfolio*, an extensive three-volume set of drawings, was published by Horizon Press in New York. Part of the reason for this continuous interest in Wright's drawings is the way in which they reflect his notion of organic architecture.

Early on, Wright understood that drawing could be used as a powerful tool. Wright claims in his memoir, *An Autobiography*, that it was his drawing skill that had first impressed Sullivan and convinced him to hire Wright.[31] By the time he assembled his staff in the Oak Park Studio, Wright had honed his drawing ability under the tutelage of Sullivan, who himself was a masterful draftsman.

The drawings that were developed in the Oak Park Studio from 1895 to 1909, and in particular the period from 1905 to 1909, were impressive not only for their volume, but also for their consistency. Thanks to a staff of multiple competent drafters, the drawings rivaled Wright's architectural style in their clarity of composition and language. In fact, these drawings perhaps played as critical of a role in establishing Wright as the leader of the Prairie School as the buildings themselves. In this sense, the role of the drawing in Wright's practice can be equated to that of his speeches and texts, only based on a graphic language of clean horizontals, abstract planes of color, and sharp shadow lines. They were carefully constructed to embody the formal principles of the Prairie Style and can be analyzed as records of the intent behind Wright's work.

Marion Mahony was the key figure in the development of the Oak Park Studio's representational language. She has been called the most talented member of the studio, and the only person among Wright's team of draftsmen to

27 Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture," *The Architectural Record* XXIII, no. 3 (March 1908)., p 158.

28 Frank Lloyd Wright, *Frank Lloyd Wright: An Autobiography*, 1st ed (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1943), p 146.

29 Ibid., pp 142-143.

30 Frank Lloyd Wright and Arthur Drexler, *The Drawings of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Published for the Museum of Modern Art by Horizon Press, 1962).

31 Eileen Michels, "The Early Drawings of Frank Lloyd Wright Reconsidered," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 30, no. 4 (1971): 294–303, https://doi.org/10.2307/988702, p 294

whom he deferred in matters of representation.[32] Mahony began her employment with Wright in 1895 as his only employee. In the early years of her employment, she produced working drawings and specifications. Despite Wright's claim of his innate drawing talent, Mahony must have had some influence in these early years. As Eileen Michels and Janine Pregliasco have noted, Mahony's first project with Wright also saw a noticeable increase in the quality of his drawings.[33]

Still, Wright often hired other local artists on contract to produce renderings of his work, presumably because Mahony was needed to carry out the more tedious, day-to-day aspects of office work. Louis Rasmussen was one of these figures, along with Ernest Albert, Charles Corwin, Hugh Garden, Paul Lautrup, and Lawrence Buck. These renderers were shared by many of Chicago's architectural offices, and therefore their work tended toward corporate uniformity.[34] Even after he had amassed a more substantial work force, Wright continued to turn to contract artists, particularly Rasmussen, for renderings.

The first indications of a truly consistent, in-house rendering style appeared between the years 1905 and 1907. As Paul Kruty has pointed out, the main catalyst was the twentieth annual Chicago Architectural Club Exhibition in 1907, in which Wright was to have a full room dedicated to his work. Besides Wright's contribution, the exhibition was to be a major event in the Chicago architectural community, lasting one full month.[35]

32 Paul Larson, "Marion Mahony & Walter Burley Griffin: The Marriage Of Drawing & Architecture," *The Print Collector's Newsletter* 13, no. 2 (1982), 38.

33 See Eileen Michels, "The Early Drawings of Frank Lloyd Wright Reconsidered," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 30, no. 4 (1971): 294–303, https://doi.org/10.2307/988702, p 302; and Janice Pregliasco, "The Life and Work of Marion Mahony Griffin," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 21, no. 2 (1995): 165–92, https://doi.org/10.2307/4102823, p 168.

34 Paul Kruty, "Graphic Depictions: The Evolution of Marion Mahony's Architectural Renderings," in *Marion Mahony Reconsidered*, ed. David Van Zanten (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p 54.

35 Wilbert R. Hasbrouck, *The Chicago Architectural Club: Prelude to the Modern* (New York, N.Y: Monacelli Press, 2005), 355.

Significantly, it was the first time Wright had exhibited with the club since 1902 – his previous exhibition in conjunction with the CAC had drawn significant criticism.[36] Thus, Wright was eager to put his best foot forward, and he recognized that drawings were an important way of accomplishing this. Together, he and Mahony, whose renderings of Unity Temple (1905) had been well received in publication, developed a unique graphic style in the two years leading up to the exhibition.[37] Wright provided direction and guidance, and Mahony executed the drawings.

According to Paul Kruty, Wright pulled the aesthetic inspiration from a diverse range of precedents, including art nouveau and even popular advertisements, but most notably from Japanese wood block prints, or ukiyo-e. The Japanese print was an art form that Wright avidly collected and that he believed reflected his views on nature, simplicity, and even democratic ideals, thus tying the drawing style directly to his theoretical positions and advocacy of organic architecture.[38] The role of Japanese art and culture in the Prairie School has been frequently acknowledged, and there was a constant presence of Japanese art in Wright's studio. Wright likely brought this practice from his early employment in the office of Silsbee, who was also an avid collector of Japanese art. Silsbee's cousin, Ernest Fenollosa, was an early promoter of Japanese art and culture in the United States, having spent twelve years in a post at the Imperial University in Tokyo. Thanks to this family connection, Silsbee's collection was one of the first private collections of Japanese art in Chicago, and perhaps in the United States.[39]

36 Kathryn Smith, *Wright on Exhibit: Frank Lloyd Wright's Architectural Exhibitions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 9.

37 Paul Kruty, "Graphic Depictions: The Evolution of Marion Mahony's Architectural Renderings," in *Marion Mahony Reconsidered*, ed. David Van Zanten (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 54.

38 Kevin Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan: The Role of Traditional Japanese Art and Architecture in the Work of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993), p 108.

39 Kevin Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan: The Role of Traditional Japanese Art and Architecture in the Work of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993), p 21-22.

Figure 1.2. Plum Garden in Kameido. Utagawa Hiroshige, c. 1857, Color woodblock print. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. (https://library-artstor-org.libproxy.wustl.edu/asset/SS35559_35559_34101454.)

By 1905, the year in which the Glasner House was being designed, Wright had also acquired his own substantial collection of prints, many of which he obtained after having traveled to Japan with his wife that year.[40] Wright was so enamored with the art form that he published a book dedicated to the subject, titled *The Japanese Print: An Interpretation* (1912). The prefacing essay carefully enumerates the qualities that, to Wright, made the ukiyo-e both beautiful and poetic:

> The Japanese, by means of this process – to him by this habit of study almost instinctive – casts a glamour over everything. He is a true poet. Surely life in old Japan must have been a perpetual communion with the divine heart of nature.[41]

Wright later illustrated the essay with thirty-two prints from his own collection. It is interesting that in his own collection, Wright favored natural and domestic subjects, particularly those of the artist Hiroshige, who was a master of landscape art (figs. 1.1-1.2).[42] Interestingly, it seems that Wright's love of the Japanese print was not intrinsically architectural, and had more to do with their abstract embodiment of organic design. Wright clarifies that the appeal of the Japanese print was in its holistic integration of structure and geometry:

> The most important fact to realize in a study of this subject is that, with all its informal grace, Japanese art is a thoroughly structural art; fundamentally so in any and every medium…But we have used the word structure, taking for granted that we agreed upon its meaning. The word structure is here used to designate an organic form, an organization in a very definite manner of parts or elements into a larger unity – a vital whole.[43]

40 Ellen E. Roberts, "Ukiyo-e in Chicago: Frank Lloyd Wright, Marion Mahony Griffin and the Prairie School," *Art in Print* 3, no. 2 (2013), p 5.

41 Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Japanese Print: An Interpretation* (Chicago: Ralph Fletcher Seymour Co., 1912), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.c034918470, p 12.

42 *Catalogue of a Loan Exhibition of Japanese Colour Prints*; with Notes Explanatory and Descriptive, and an Introductory Essay by Frederick William Gookin.Chicago, Mar.5 to Mar.25, 1908. (Chicago?, 1908), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/njp.32101074351097, p 123.

43 Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Japanese Print: An Interpretation* (Chicago: Ralph Fletcher Seymour Co., 1912), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.c034918470, p 6.

This passage highlights the importance of the Japanese print to Wright's work, as an ideal model of organic design, and as the abstracted graphic form of what he strove for in his architecture. In fact, Wright refers to the Japanese print in "In the Cause of Architecture":

> This reticence in the matter of ornamentation is characteristic of these structures and for at least two reasons: first, they are the expression of an idea that the ornamentation of a building should be constitutional, a matter of the nature of the structure beginning with the ground plan. In the buildings themselves, in the sense of the whole, there is lacking neither richness or incident but their qualities are secured not be applied decoration, they are found in the fashioning of the whole, in which color, too plays as significant a part as it does in an old Japanese wood block print.[44]

The influence of the Japanese print illustrates just how seriously Wright took the graphic representation of his work, as an opportunity to reinforce the principles of organic design.

Indeed, Wright understood how important this new drawing style would be in getting his work publicly recognized while it was still under development. A telling example involves the rendering of the K.C. DeRhodes House, one of the first to be produced in Mahony's mature style. In the lower right corner, Wright appended his authorship by writing, "Drawn by Mahony after FLW and Hiroshige" (fig. 1.3).[45] The note clearly documents Wright's supervision in the development of the style, and also acknowledges the influence of the Japanese print in its nod to Hiroshige.

Wright included thirty-eight projects in the 1907 exhibition, and almost all were represented by Mahony's pen and ink perspectives. The new style was so successful that Wright was declared the founder of the Prairie School.[46] One critic took aim at Wright's installation at the 1907 exhibition – the poet and journalist Harriet Monroe. Monroe, an acquaintance of Wright,

44 Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture," *The Architectural Record* XXIII, no. 3 (March 1908), p 163.

45 David Van Zanten, ed., *Marion Mahony Reconsidered*, Chicago Architecture and Urbanism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 66.

46 Kathryn Smith, *Wright on Exhibit: Frank Lloyd Wright's Architectural Exhibitions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 24.

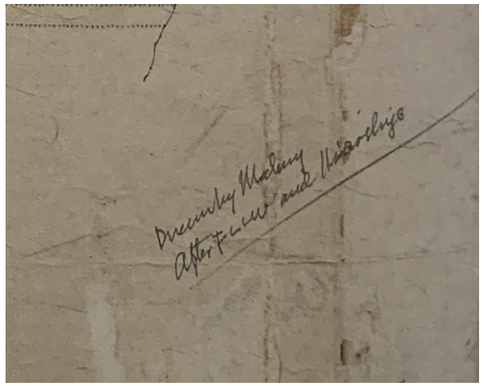


Figure 1.3. Presentation drawing of the K.C. DeRhodes House, South Bend, Indiana (1906), detail of handwritten note – "Drawn by Mahony after FLLW and Hiroshige." (Anne Watson, ed., *Beyond Architecture: Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin: America, Australia, India*, p 50.)

commented that the display was "so unusual, at times even bizarre," and directly criticized his public buildings, which included the Larkin Administration Building and Unity Temple, as "fantastic blockhouses." However, Monroe reserved favorable comments for Wright's residential work, noting that "…some of these seem to grow out of the ground as naturally as the trees," a testament to the success of Mahony's renderings.[47]

The *Wasmuth Portfolio* was perhaps the most powerful compendium of drawings from the Oak Park Studio. Officially titled *Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe von Frank Lloyd Wright*, the portfolio summarized the work of Wright's early career in 100 lithograph plates, printed from pen and ink drawings, many of which originated from Mahony's perspectives.[48] The folio cemented the success of the 1907 exhibition. The projects contained in the portfolio span from the Winslow House (1893) – Wright's first independent commission, and the Robie House (1909) – now an almost unanimously appreciated exemplar of the mature prairie style – and also included the Glasner House. Also included are the Larkin Administration Building in Buffalo (1906) and the Unity Temple in Oak Park (1908), Wright's two most significant public projects, though the vast majority of the two volumes is devoted to residential work. This range documents the development of the prairie style and Wright's philosophy of organic architecture.

47 Kathryn Smith, *Wright on Exhibit: Frank Lloyd Wright's Architectural Exhibitions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), p 24.

48 H. Allen Brooks, "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Wasmuth Drawings," *The Art Bulletin* 48, no. 2 (1966), 195.

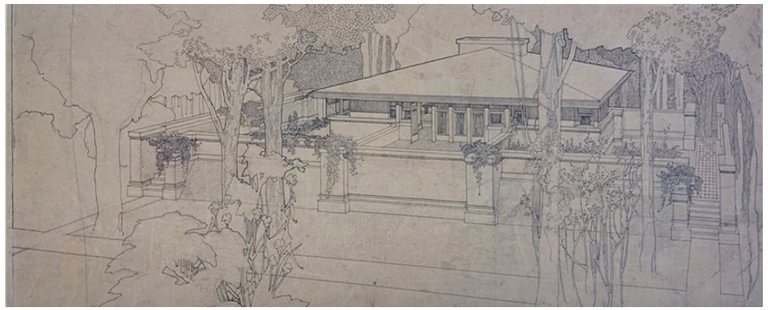


Figure 1.4. Perspective drawing of the Cheney House, Oak Park, IL. Marion Mahony, delineator, n.d. (Frank Lloyd Wright, *Selected Drawings Portfolio*. New York: Horizon Press, 1977, plate 58.)

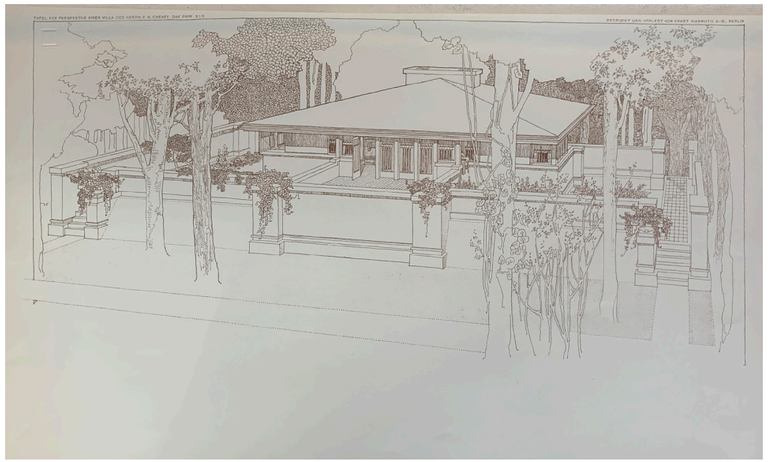


Figure 1.5. *Wasmuth Portfolio* – Plate XXX, Cheney House. (Frank Lloyd Wright, *Ausgefuhrte Bauten Und Entwurfe*, Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1910.)

Because of the printing process, all drawings had to be re-traced and formatted for the final publication. As H. Allen Brooks has noted, this was accomplished by tracing over either photographs or existing drawings. The tracing was carried out by Wright and a small team at his studio in exile in Florence. Wright was assisted by his son, John Lloyd Wright, and Taylor Wooley, another associate – Mahony was not involved, although she had produced most of the underlying compositions.[49] Many of the drawings are nearly identical to existing compositions known to be in Mahony's hand, such as the perspectives of the Cheney House (fig. 1.4 & 1.5), the DeRhodes House (fig. 1.6 & 1.7), and Unity Temple (fig. 1.8 & 1.9)

Wright meticulously designed the portfolio, both as a volume and as a constellation of images.[50] The final printed volume is of extremely uniform quality, in either gray or brown ink on gray and eggshell paper measuring 16 by 25 ¼ inches. The individual hand of any one delineator is nearly impossible to determine, emphasizing the architecture over the particularities of individual style.[51] The drawings are abstracted by the absence of color, with the exception of light washes to suggest tone in some of the more prominent, full-page perspectives (fig. 1.10). The delicate linework and use of foliage to enhance the buildings is faintly reminiscent both of the Japanese print and Mahony's drawings. Thus, the drawing style that was developed personally by Mahony and Wright had translated into a totally abstract and highly uniform graphic language.

The Wasmuth drawings that feature both plan and perspective on the same plate highlight the unity of the architectural design. As with the

49 Brooks provides an extensive list of compositions whose authorships have been verified in his analysis of the portfolio. H. Allen Brooks, "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Wasmuth Drawings," *The Art Bulletin* 48, no. 2 (1966): 193–202, https://doi.org/10.2307/3048363, p 202.

50 Kathryn Smith, *Wright on Exhibit: Frank Lloyd Wright's Architectural Exhibitions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 28.

51 H. Allen Brooks, "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Wasmuth Drawings," *The Art Bulletin* 48, no. 2 (1966): 193–202, https://doi.org/10.2307/3048363, p 193.

Figure 1.6. Presentation drawing of the K.C. DeRhodes House, South Bend, Indiana (1906). Marion Mahony, delineator. (Anne Watson, ed., *Beyond Architecture: Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin: America, Australia, India*, p 50.)

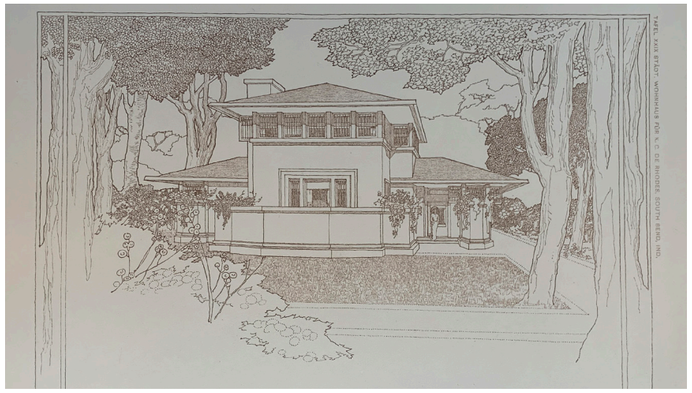


Figure 1.7. *Wasmuth Portfolio* – Plate XXIX, DeRhodes House. (Frank Lloyd Wright, *Ausgefuhrte Bauten Und Entwurfe*, Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1910.)

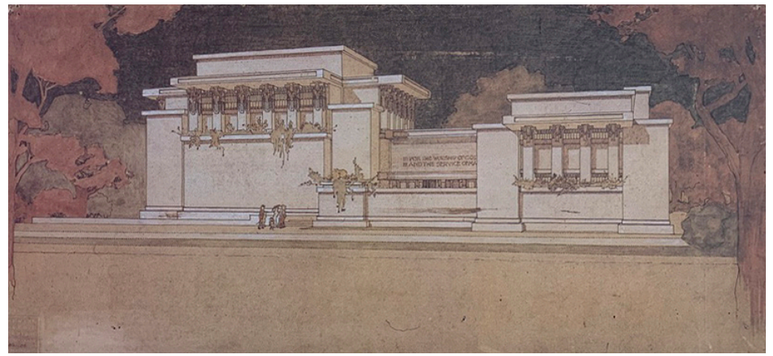


Figure 1.8. Perspective rendering of Unity Temple, Oak Park, IL. Marion Mahony, delineator, 1905. (Frank Lloyd Wright, *Selected Drawings Portfolio*. New York: Horizon Press, 1977.)

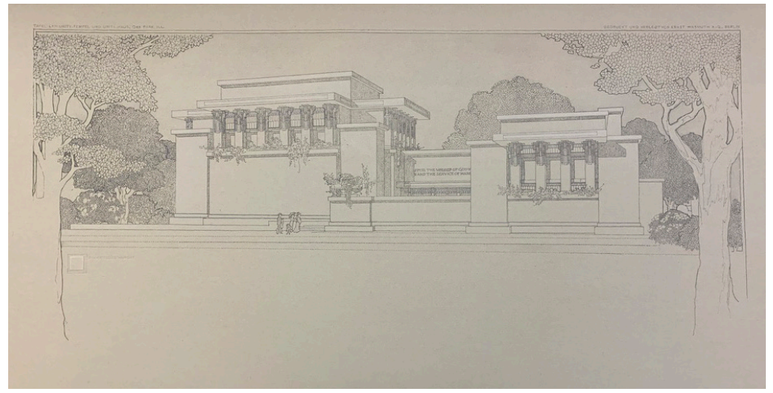


Figure 1.9. *Wasmuth Portfolio* – Plate LXIII, Unity Temple. (Frank Lloyd Wright, *Ausgefuhrte Bauten Und Entwurfe*, Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1910.)

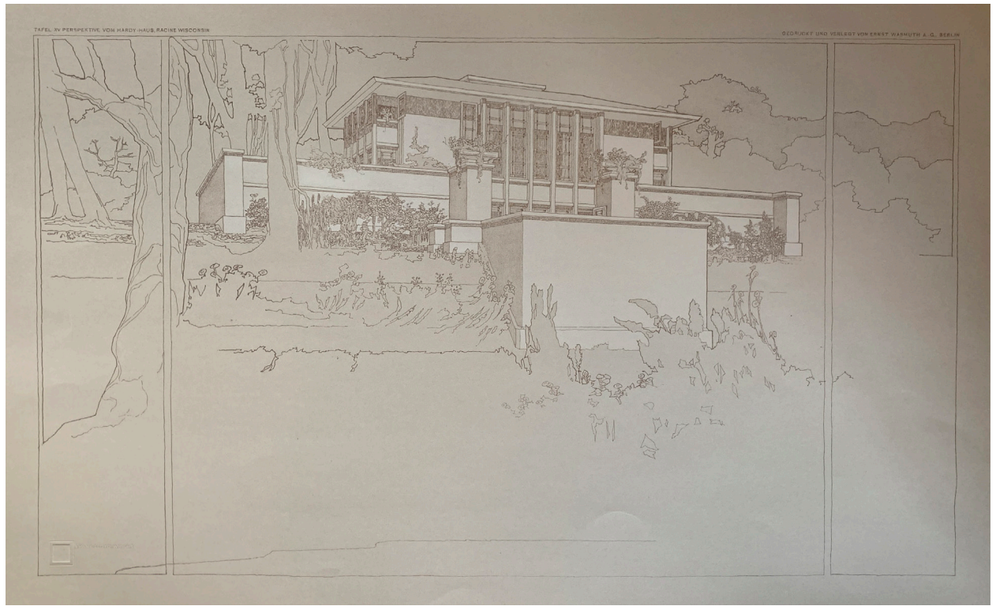


Figure 1.10. *Wasmuth Portfolio* – Plate XV, Hardy House. (Frank Lloyd Wright, *Ausgefuhrte Bauten Und Entwurfe*, Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1910.)

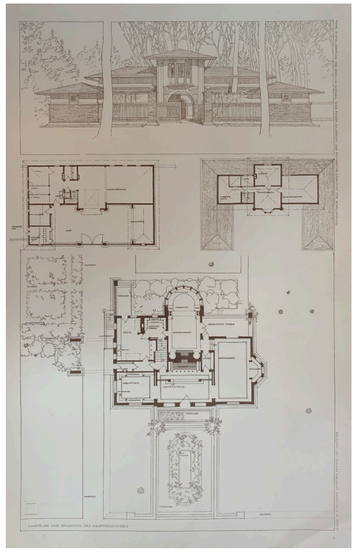


Figure 1.11. *Wasmuth Portfolio* – Plate III, Winslow Barn. (Frank Lloyd Wright, *Ausgefuhrte Bauten Und Entwurfe*, Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1910.) Photograph by author.

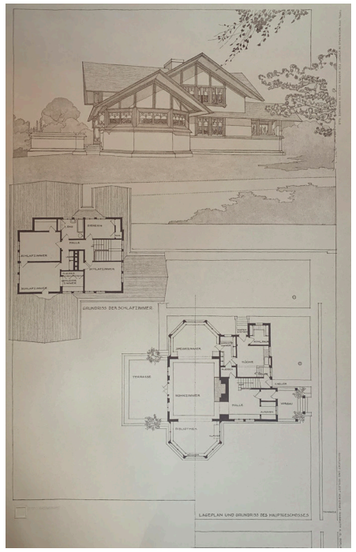


Figure 1.12. *Wasmuth Portfolio* – Plate XXIV, Hickox House. (Frank Lloyd Wright, *Ausgefuhrte Bauten Und Entwurfe*, Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1910.)

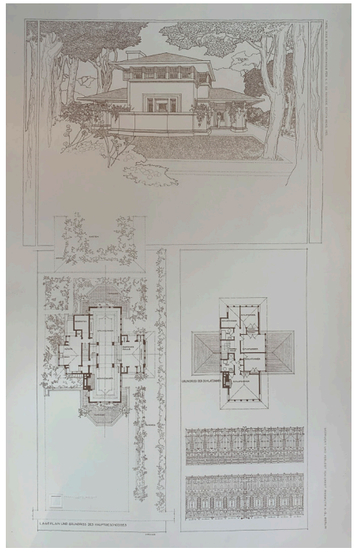


Figure 1.13. *Wasmuth Portfolio* – Plate XXIX, DeRhodes House. (Frank Lloyd Wright, *Ausgefuhrte Bauten Und Entwurfe*, Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1910.)

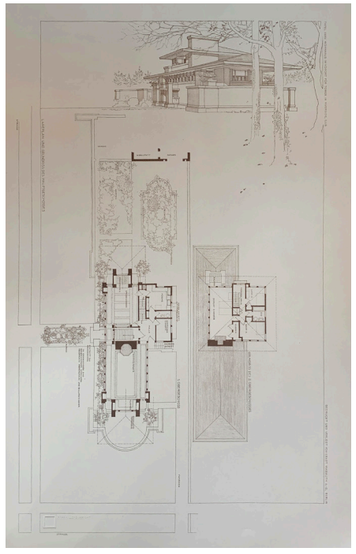


Figure 1.14. *Wasmuth Portfolio* – Plate XXXV, Tomek House. (Frank Lloyd Wright, *Ausgefuhrte Bauten Und Entwurfe*, Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1910.)

Japanese print, the geometries come together to form a complete, organic graphic with an underlying order and implied grid. This can be seen in the drawings of the Winslow Barn and the Hickox, DeRhodes, and Tomek Houses, showing how the drawings were seen as fulfillments of the concept of organic design (figs. 1.11-1.14).

The international reach of the *Wasmuth Portfolio* is now well known, extending Wright's influence for the first time to Europe. It also marked the first time Wright's work was assembled into a single dedicated publication. The portfolio played a key role in Wright's career by propelling him from a locally recognized architect to the status of international celebrity.

The influence of Wright's prairie style in Europe is especially interesting when one considers that his work was propagated there chiefly through drawings of his buildings as printed in the *Wasmuth Portfolio*. Wright's work was being emulated largely based on representations of his buildings, underscoring the importance of drawings to Wright's influence, and also the incisive compositional and drawing talent of Mahony.

It is interesting to note that several key compositional aspects of the Oak Park drawing style carried through into Wright's later career, an indication of its close alignment with his design philosophy and its evolution from prairie house to Usonian. It also shows how seriously Wright took drawings as a fundamental means of communicating his ideals. Among these qualities, as Brooks points out in "Architectural Drawings by Frank Lloyd Wright," were the use of off-centered, perspective views, and the justification of the building to the upper extreme of the image in order to suggest its spatial context.[52] These qualities, as will be shown in the specific case of the Glasner House, work to emphasize the key aspects of Wright's design philosophy: the integration of building and site, and the resulting horizontal expression in elevation. The drawings, like the Japanese prints that Wright admired, should be viewed as holistic expressions of organic design and valuable tools in understanding Wright's architecture.

52 H. Allen Brooks, "Architectural Drawings by Frank Lloyd Wright," *The Burlington Magazine* 104, no. 710 (1962), p 211.

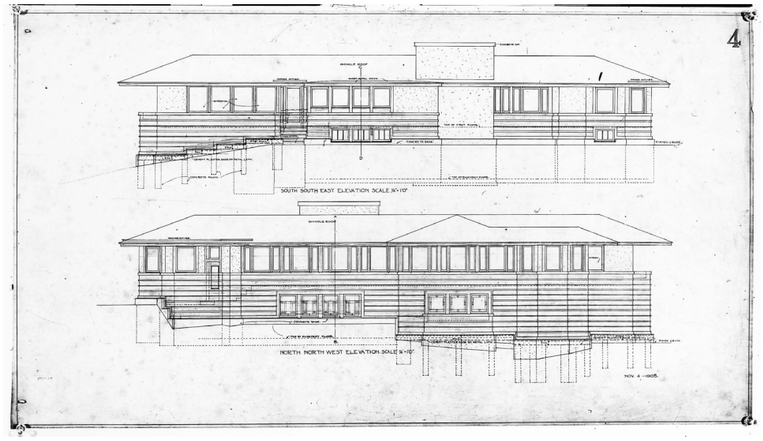


Figure 2.1 – Glasner House, Glencoe, Illinois (1906). Frank Lloyd Wright. South and North Elevation working drawings. (Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, New York, Series III, 0505.008.)

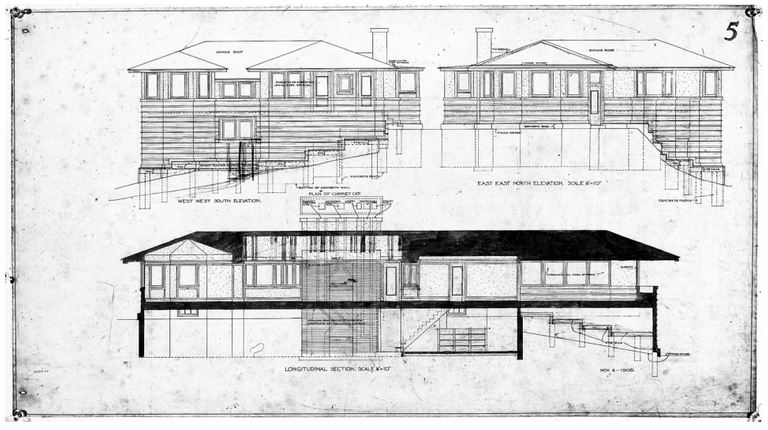


Figure 2.2 – Glasner House, Glencoe, Illinois (1906). Frank Lloyd Wright. West and East Elevations and Longitudinal Section working drawings (Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, New York, Series III, 0505.008.)

Chapter 2

Authoring the Context: Frank Lloyd Wright As an Author of the Glasner House

The man who has worked out the salvation of a summer cottage on his merits, held the condition in rational solution, and expressed them in terms of wood and plaster, with beauty germane to the proposition, has more valuable experience than he who builds a city with the pomp and circumstance of established forms.

- Frank Lloyd Wright, "The Architect"[53]

Built in 1906, the Glasner House falls within the critical period of development of Wright's prairie style, his philosophy of organic architecture, and the drawing style that came to characterize the work of the Oak Park Studio. Therefore, it stands as an interesting example of how these principles were implemented in his practice. This chapter will explore how through a thorough reading of the site, nature, and the functional requirements of the house, Wright asserted specific positions on the engagement of the landscape, the organization of domestic space, and the representation of the house through drawings.

Description of the Glasner House

Unlike the flat terrain of many of Chicago's suburbs, the topography of Glencoe is characterized by a series of steep ravines. Originally designed as a small summer cottage, the Glasner House is set into one of these ravines, not far from the shore of Lake Michigan. From the exterior, the house is unassuming in its environment, having been set back a distance from the main road, and projecting back along the ravine. The house is articulated by a series of horizontal datums that are evident in the elevation drawing: the first occurs at the line of the windowsill, below which the opaque exterior walls of dark-stained board and batten drop into the ravine embankment. The cladding material emphasizes the uninterrupted horizontal line by creating a shadow line at each projecting batten.

53 Frank Lloyd Wright, "The Architect," *The Brickbuilder* 9, no. 6 (June 1900), p 127.

The windows are set into a horizontal stucco band that wraps around the house. This band is capped by a shallow hipped roof, forming large overhangs that project out over the ravine (fig. 2.1-2.2).

The long ravine elevation is visible on the approach from the north; however, after crossing a bridge over the ravine, the lower level disappears, and one arrives at the driveway (figs. 2.3-2.5). The formal entrance is connected to the driveway by a small walkway, which is oriented toward the ravine, and passes obliquely between the octagonal volume of the library, and a retaining wall. This oblique entry promenade has the effect of alternately concealing and revealing views of the house and the ravine landscape (fig. 2.6).

The entry is defined by a small exterior terrace. The retaining wall to the north prohibits the view of the ravine, which lies just beyond. Instead, the eye is directed upward to the lines of the overhanging roof and the projecting volumes of the house. Just ahead, the front door leads into the house at yet another oblique angle (figs. 2.7-2.9).

Once inside, a small staircase of four or five steps ascends to the level of the living room. After being led off of the main axis for the majority of the entry sequence, the living room finally provides a point of arrival. The space is light and generous, anchored by a massive fireplace in the south wall, and expands under the sprawling roof. Playful decoration gives the space a charming character. The ceiling of the living room is decorated with a series of wood battens in varying widths, abstractly resembling the branches of trees. Art glass windows permit plenty of warm, filtered daylight. (figs. 2.10-2.13).

The centerline of the living room serves as the main East-West axis of the house, along which the main spaces are organized. A short corridor leads off of the living room to an enclosed veranda to the west, which projects out over the ravine embankment. This space embodies one of the key spatial features of the house: upon arrival, one is perched a full story over the ground below (fig. 2.14).

The library, master bedroom, and kitchen are all accessed back through the main living space. The library, which was previously encountered from the exterior, projects off of the living room to the East opposite the corridor and veranda. Keeping with Wright's conception of the kitchen as a "laboratory,"[54] the kitchen is separated from the main space by a door to the right of the living room fireplace, protruding off of the south elevation as a shallow volume. The space is lit by a line of southerly facing art glass windows that wrap the southwest corner of the kitchen – the only windows in the house that are not sheltered by an overhang. A small hall connects the kitchen to the corridor and leads past a stairway that descends to the basement level, screened from the kitchen by a series of vertical wooden slats (figs. 2.15-2.18).

The master bedroom is entered through the living room to the right of the corridor. Like the living room, the bedroom feels spacious, with a series of art glass windows that overlook the ravine below. The roof projects dramatically past the line of the windows in a gesture that reinforces the feeling of being sheltered. The master bath connects the bedroom to the corridor (fig. 2.19).

A passage off of the bedroom leads past a walk-in closet and into a small octagonal space, labeled a "sewing room" in Wright's plan. From the exterior, the space is expressed by the vertical, octagonal volume projecting into the ravine on the north side of the house (figs. 2.20-2.21).

54 Frank Lloyd Wright, *Frank Lloyd Wright: An Autobiography*, 1st ed (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1943), p 142-143.

Figure 2.3. The Glasner House, Glencoe, Illinois (1906). Frank Lloyd Wright. Exterior view from Sheridan Road looking southwest. Photograph by author.

Figure 2.4. Glasner House. Exterior view showing angled retaining wall and entry walkway. Photograph by author.

Figure 2.5. Glasner House. Exterior view from Sheridan Road, driveway entrance. Photograph by author.

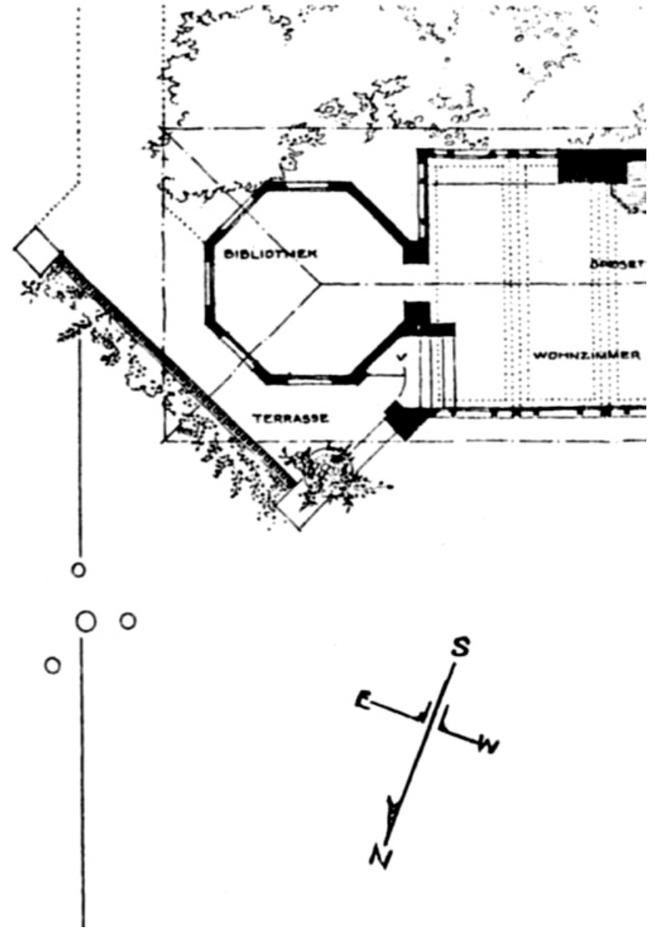


Figure 2.6. Glasner House. Plan of entrance showing oblique entry walkway around library before arriving at the entry terrace. (Charles E. Aguar and Berdeana Aguar, *Wrightscapes: Frank Lloyd Wright's Landscape Designs.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002, p 101).

Figure 2.7. Glasner House. Exterior view overlooking the partial-height wall to the north of the main entrance. Photograph by author.

Figure 2.8. Glasner House. Exterior view of main entrance. Photograph by author.

Figure 2.9. Glasner House. Entry interior, view from top of stair. Photograph by author.

Figure 2.10. Glasner House. Living room interior, view from entry stair. Photograph by author.

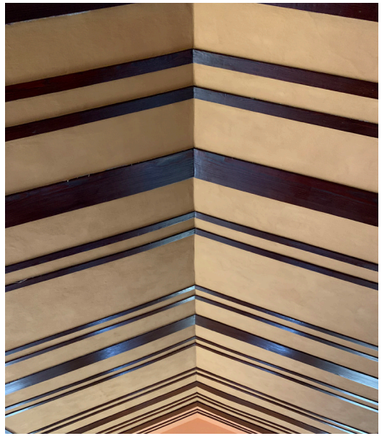


Figure 2.11. Glasner House. Detail of living room ceiling. Photograph by author.

Figure 2.12. Glasner House. Detail of stained glass at living room. Photograph by author.

Figure 2.13. Glasner House. Detail of stained glass, exterior (veranda). Photograph by author.

Figure 2.14. Glasner House. Exterior view of garage (lower level) and enclosed porch (upper level) looking east, showing the change in ground elevation from the front entrance to the rear of the house. Photograph by author.

Figure 2.15. Glasner House. Kitchen interior, view from northeast corner. Photograph by author.

Figure 2.16. Glasner House. Kitchen interior, view from northwest corner. Photograph by the author.

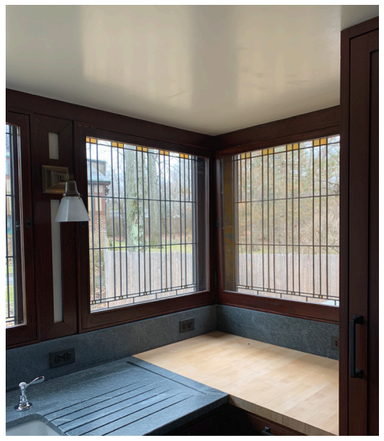


Figure 2.17. Glasner House. Detail of windows at kitchen, stained glass wraps the southwest corner. Photograph by author.

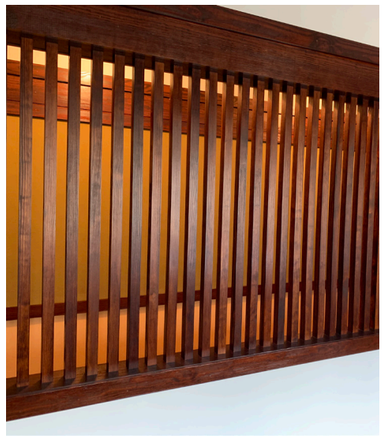


Figure 2.18. Glasner House. Detail of wood screen between kitchen and basement stair. Photograph by author.

Figure 2.19. Glasner House. Master bedroom interior, view through art glass windows in the north wall. Photograph by author.

Figure 2.20. Glasner House. Sewing room interior. Photograph by author.

Figure 2.21. Glasner House. Exterior view of octagonal sewing room, shown at right. Photograph by author.

Landscape

As suggested in the description, the ravine plays an important role in the orientation, organization, and experience of the house. The ravine environment of Glencoe apparently appealed to Wright – he later designed the nearby Sherman Booth House in 1911, which he called "house by a ravine" in the presentation rendering (fig. 2.22), and the Ravine Bluffs development, which contained six houses, in 1915. However, this topography was a new endeavor for Wright at the time of the Glasner House's construction, and he managed it by placing the house on the "brow" of the ravine, rather than at the peak, which results in the dramatic, projecting spaces of the veranda and the sewing room.

Wright had very specific ideas on the way a house should engage its site. Regardless of the nature of the site, Wright believed that the building should be clearly physically as well as visually connected to the ground. This connection was accomplished through an articulated base, what Wright called the "watertable," from which the architecture ascended. This "watertable" is visible at the Glasner House in the stepped concrete base that runs around the perimeter of the house. The base anchors the house to the site and structurally allows for an unbroken expression of the exterior wall up to the second floor sill, which Wright conceived as a "screen," with a continuous horizontal band of windows below the roof overhang.[55]

Later, reflecting on the relationship between house and landscape, Wright clarified, "I knew well that no house should ever be on a hill or on anything. It should be of the hill. Belonging to it. Hill and house should live together each the happier for the other."[56] This sentiment can be read as an expression of organic design, in which building and landscape are conceived as parts of a harmonious whole. Apart from the Glasner House, this was a philosophy that Wright repeated at his own home and studio at Taliesin in Spring Green, Wisconsin (1911). According to Wright, the hill upon which the

55 Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture," *The Architectural Record* XXIII, no. 3 (March 1908), p 159.

56 Frank Lloyd Wright, *Frank Lloyd Wright: An Autobiography*, 1st ed (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1943), p 168.

Figure 2.22. Perspective rendering of the Booth House, Glencoe, IL. Frank Lloyd Wright, 1911. (Frank Lloyd Wright, *Selected Drawings Portfolio*. New York: Horizon Press, 1977. Plate 7)

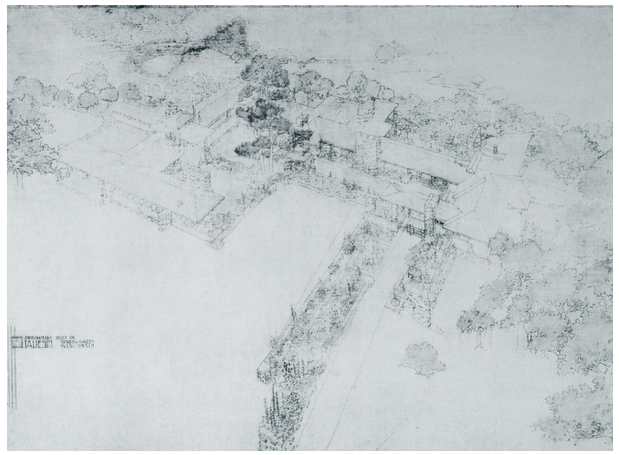


Figure 2.23. Preliminary Perspective drawing of Taliesin, Spring Green, WI, showing vista over river valley to the southeast. Frank Lloyd Wright, c 1912. (https://library-artstor-org.libproxy.wustl.edu/asset/ARTSTOR_103_41822000226066.)

house sits was one of his favorite places in his childhood, and the Welsh word “Taliesin” literally translates into English as “shining brow.”[57] The aerial perspective that was generated for the project shows the projecting relationship of the low, ground-hugging masses of the main living spaces, studio, and stables to the open vista beyond (fig. 2.23).

Wright continued this strategy in his designs for the Usonian houses, which were often designed for unconventional sites located well outside of urban centers, and unlike the prairie houses, were not confined to the relatively flat topography of the American Midwest. Projects such as the Pew House in Madison, Wisconsin (1938) (figs. 2.24-2.25), the Sturges House in Los Angeles (1939-1940) (figs. 2.26-2.27), and the Affleck House in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan (1941) (fig. 2.28), all contended with difficult sloping sites. The common response in each case was to embed the upper floor in a portion of the slope, where the main entrance was located, and to allow the house to open up along the downhill exposure. The drama of the landscape was often also captured in drawings, such as the Sturges House rendering - which emphasizes the projection of the broad, cantilevered terrace over the landscape - or the renderings of the Pew House and Affleck House, which adopt a similar station points in the ravine below, exaggerating the extending terraces as they descend into the topography.

Perhaps the most famous example of Wright’s designs for sloping, non-uniform sites is the iconic Fallingwater in Mill Run, Pennsylvania (1935). Here, Wright convinced his client to locate the house on the most picturesque part of the site - a rocky outcrop with a waterfall – rather than further south, where the house would have had a direct view of the feature. The resulting design is a series of descending, cantilevered terraces, anchored by a central vertical core, that project out over the stream. Like the Usonian Houses, the engagement of the landscape was reflected in the rendering of the project. The now-famous drawing, which shows the house from below with waterfall in the foreground, exaggerates the natural context (fig. 2.29).

57 Frank Lloyd Wright, *Frank Lloyd Wright: An Autobiography*, 1st ed (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1943), p 167.

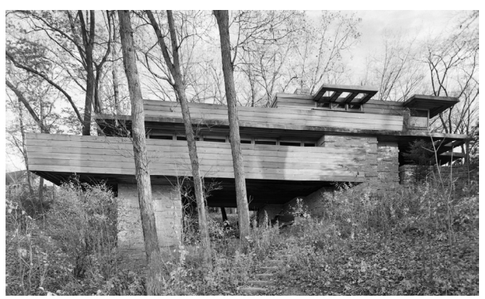


Figure 2.24. Pew House, Shorewood Hills, Wisconsin (1938). Frank Lloyd Wright. Ezra Stoller, photographer, 1950-1951. (https://library-artstor-org.libproxy.wustl.edu/asset/ASTOLLERIG_10311593144.)

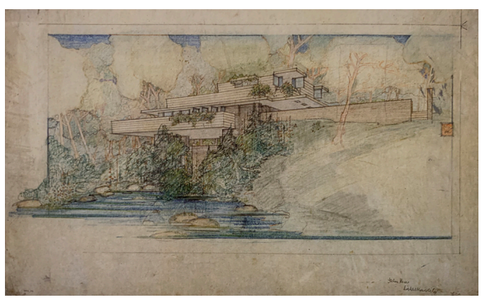


Figure 2.25. Perspective rendering of the Pew House, Madison, WI, 1938-1940. Frank Lloyd Wright and Herbert Fritz Jr., delineators. Graphite pencil and color pencil on tracing paper, 22 x 36 inches. Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, 4012.002, in Kathryn Smith, *Wright on Exhibit: Frank Lloyd Wright’s Architectural Exhibitions*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017.

Figure 2.26. Sturges House, Los Angeles, California (1939-1940). Frank Lloyd Wright. (https://library-artstor-org.libproxy.wustl.edu/asset/SS35530_35530_37336978.)

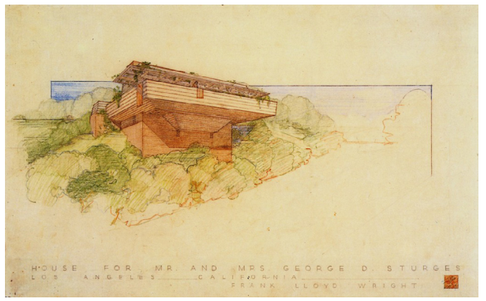


Figure 2.27. Perspective rendering of the Sturges House, Los Angeles, California (1939-1940). Frank Lloyd Wright. (https://library-artstor-org.libproxy.wustl.edu/asset/SS35530_35530_35451500.)

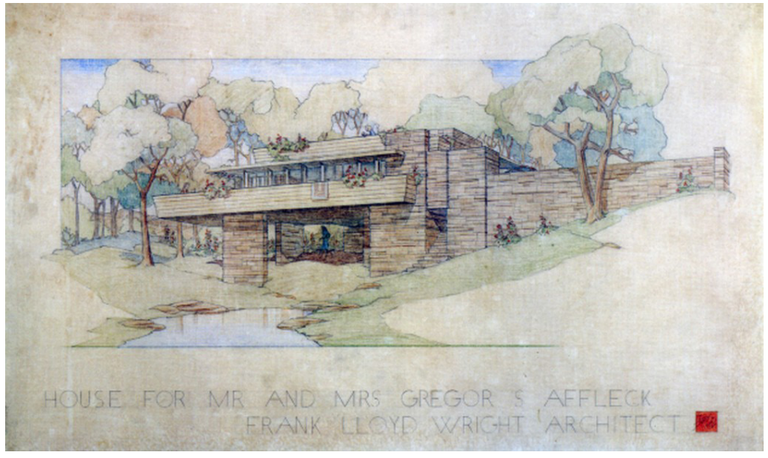


Figure 2.28. Perspective rendering of the Affleck House, Bloomfield, WI, 1941. Frank Lloyd Wright. Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives. (https://library-artstor-org.libproxy.wustl.edu/asset/AWSS35953_35953_29407461.)

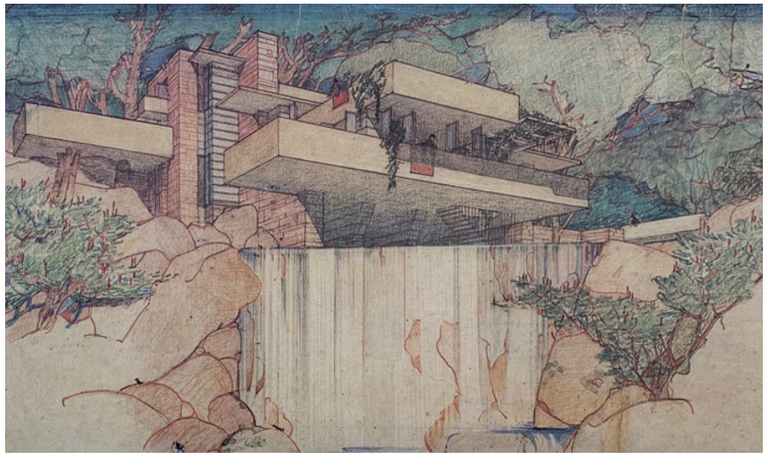


Figure 2.29. Perspective rendering of the Fallingwater, Mill Run, PA (1934-1937). Frank Lloyd Wright and John H. Howe, delineators. Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives. (Frank Lloyd Wright, *Selected Drawings Portfolio*. New York: Horizon Press, 1977. Plate 23)

The landscape approach put in place at the Glasner House can be seen as one of the first in a series of strategies that experimented with the integration of house into the landscape, so much so that in his book *Wrightscapes* (2002), which dissects the evolution of landscape designs in Wright's projects, Charles Aguar begins his section on "Environmental Designs" with a discussion of the Glasner House. According to Aguar, the most important effect of the landscape on the architecture is the way in which it regulates views, reminiscent of the "hide and reveal" principle of Zen design, in which views and fragments of the building in its landscape are orchestrated so as to never reveal an understanding of the whole. This results in moments of pause and reflection, where the house primarily acts to frame the natural environment.[58]

Aguar argues that this framing is a function of the use of the diagonal line in plan – a device that Wright incorporated into the textile block houses in the 1920's and later Usonian designs, but was unusual in the prairie houses.[59] The site plan shows that the diagonal is a product of the house's orientation along the ravine embankment (fig. 2.30). In the floor plan of the Glasner House, the diagonal functions to orient the view out over the ravine landscape, and is most evident at the entry walkway, and in the relationship of the sewing room to the main living space as it projects out over the ravine (fig. 2.31). These moments focus the view down the ravine to the west and allow the architecture to act as a framing device.[60] Thus, the principles of organic design are introduced at the Glasner House in a very deliberate and intentional sequence of experiences that serve to emphasize the building's relationship to the landscape.

Plasticity

As Wright claimed to be the case with all of

58 Charles E. Aguar and Berdeana Aguar, *Wrightscapes: Frank Lloyd Wright's Landscape Designs* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), p 100-101.

59 Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p 153.

60 Charles E. Aguar and Berdeana Aguar, *Wrightscapes: Frank Lloyd Wright's Landscape Designs* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), p 100-101.

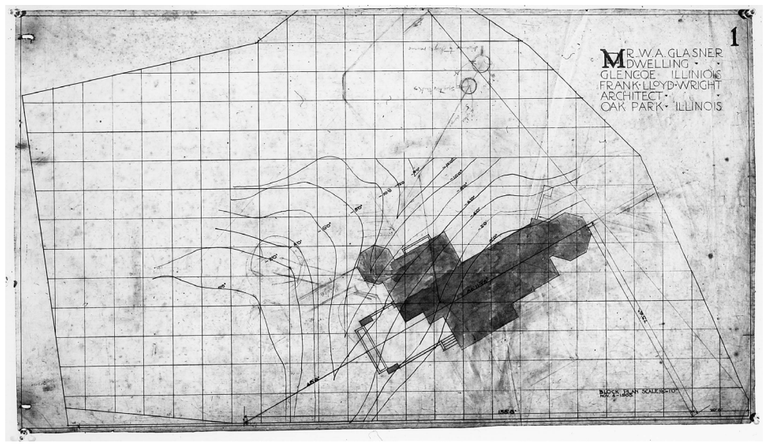


Figure 2.30. Glasner House. Working drawing, site plan. (Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, New York, Series III, 0505.005.)

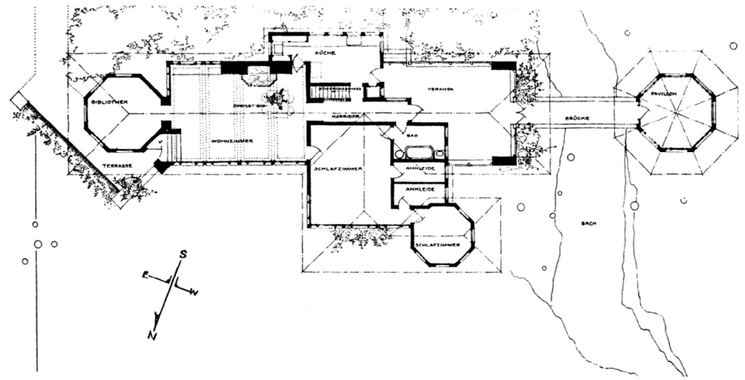


Figure 2.31. Glasner House. Floor Plan showing diagonal orientation toward ravine. (Charles E. Aguar and Berdeana Aguar, *Wrightscapes: Frank Lloyd Wright's Landscape Designs*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002, p 101.)

his designs, the interior (ground plan) and the exterior (elevation) of the Glasner House are conceived as aspects of an organically derived whole. Therefore, the careful integration of the house into the landscape translates on the interior, what Wright referred to as "a framework for human life,"[61] in its spatial plasticity and continuity. This meant a simplification and reduction of program and a more flexible use of space. At the Glasner House, the primary domestic spaces are consolidated down to three: the library, living room, and veranda, which is enclosed and generous enough to serve as a secondary living space. The idea of spatial plasticity is mediated in the Glasner House by its axial organization, which physically connects the library, living room, and veranda. This sense of spatial continuity is strengthened by the continuous line of sight through the house along the main axis, from library to veranda. In an earlier version of the design, this axis would have been extended by an octagonal tea house, connected to the veranda by an arched bridge, thus marking each end of the main axis with an octagonal volume.

The Glasner House living room also subsumes the conventional dining space, which is indicated in plan by a dashed-in table with four chairs, near the fireplace and kitchen door – a move which, while aligning with the spatial simplification and consolidation that Wright strove for, was unusual for his projects at the time. As the dining space is absorbed into the main living space, the ritual of dining becomes a less formal aspect of the everyday routine of domestic life.

Drawing

As seen in the cases of both the Pew House and Fallingwater, drawing played a major role in how the integration of house and landscape was communicated. As an early example of an organic "environmental design," the landscape also heavily informed the drawing of the Glasner House. The Glasner House was one of the seventy projects represented in the *Wasmuth Portfolio* (Plate No. 43). The vertically-oriented plate is divided into two halves, the bottom half showing the ground plan of house (including the unbuilt tea-house), and the top half showing

61 Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture," *The Architectural Record* XXIII, no. 3 (March 1908), p 162.

a perspective view very similar to Mahony's, but somewhat differing architecturally and in its treatment of the landscape, which includes a floating line of flowers in the foreground, giving an indication of the ravine slope (fig. 2.32).

The Glasner House was also included in a later 1911 edition of the portfolio, *Ausgeführte Bauten*, later reissued as *The Early Work of Frank Lloyd Wright*, which includes drawn plans and photographs of each project.[62] Along with a plan from the *Wasmuth Portfolio*, the plate includes a photograph of the house very soon after its initial construction, a rare view of the architecture and landscape in the state Wright initially intended them, with the house emerging from the natural slope of the ravine, and surrounded by undisturbed trees and undergrowth (fig. 2.33).

Interestingly enough, the perspective drawing of the Glasner House comes close to, but differs subtly from the view shown in the photograph in *Ausgeführte Bauten*. This is unusual considering the way that the drawings in the *Wasmuth Portfolio* were generated. As Brooks has shown in his analysis of the portfolio, many of the eye-level perspective views were actually copied from original photographs of the houses. This is most evident in the case of the Tomek House, where the drawing and photograph are an exact match, down to an open window on the upper floor and the shape of the trees in the foreground (fig. 2.34).[63] However, in the case of the Glasner House, the photograph is taken both farther back and farther east than the view shown in the rendering. The photograph shows a vanishing point just outside of the building enclosure, so that the perpendicular lines of the overhanging roof all point East, whereas in the rendering, the vanishing point is located within the house itself, so that the same lines converge somewhere near the front entrance.

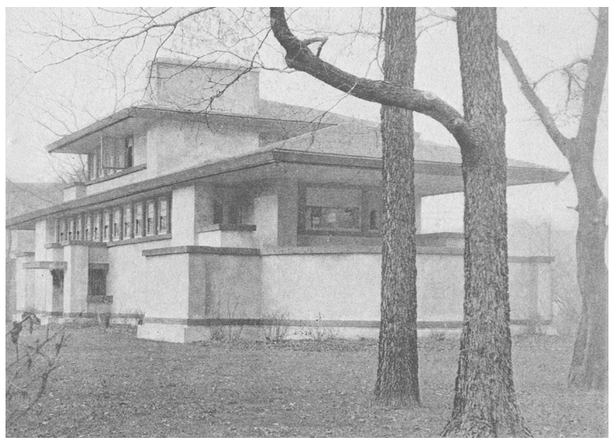
The result is a much less powerful representation in the photograph than in the drawing. The more oblique view in the photograph distorts the horizontal and de-emphasizes the relationship of the house and ravine. On the other hand,

62 Edgar Kaufmann and C. R Ashbee, *Frank Lloyd Wright, the Early Work.* (New York: Bramhall House, 1971).

63 H. Allen Brooks, "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Wasmuth Drawings," *The Art Bulletin* 48, no. 2 (1966): 193–202, https://doi.org/10.2307/3048363, p 193.

Figure 2.32. *Wasmuth Portfolio* – Plate XLIII, Glasner House. (*Frank Lloyd Wright, Ausgefuhrte Bauten Und Entwurfe*, Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1910.)

Figure 2.33. Photograph of Glasner House, c 1906. In Edgar Kaufmann and C. R Ashbee, *Frank Lloyd Wright, the Early Work.* (New York: Bramhall House, 1971).



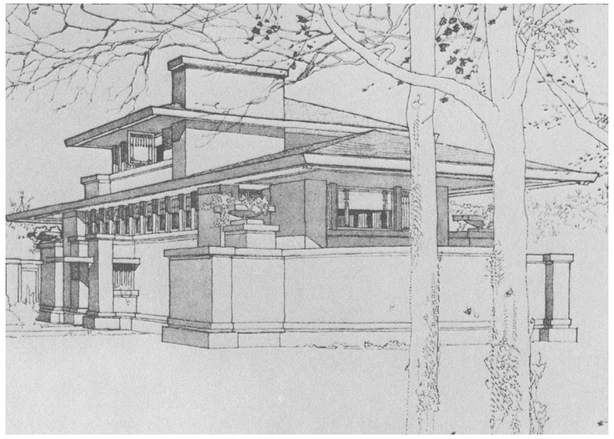


Figure 2.34. *Wasmuth portfolio* perspective and corresponding photograph of the Tomek House, Riverside, IL (1905-1907). (H. Allen Brooks, "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Wasmuth Drawings," *The Art Bulletin* 48, no. 2 (1966), figures 1 and 2).

the slight rotation of the view in the drawing emphasizes the sweeping horizontal lines, and the radial projection of the roof line dramatizes the house's projection into the ravine. These qualities support the conclusion that Wright adjusted the view of the photograph slightly in order to emphasize the organic features of the house's design, which would have been of utmost importance in the *Wasmuth Portfolio*, the most significant publication of Wright's career up until that point.

This move reveals the organic unity of elevation, plan, and perspective. Wright believed that the holistic, organic design of the house in plan and elevation would inevitably result in a compelling perspectival representation:

> The schemes are conceived in three dimensions as organic entities, let the picturesque perspective fall how it will. While a sense of the incidental perspectives the design will develop is always present, I have great faith that if the thing is rightly put together in true organic sense with proportions actually right the picturesque will take care of itself.[64]

This statement reveals Wright's thinking that the perspective view is subordinate to the design of the building, that it is beautiful in its own right as an expression of organic design. Therefore, Wright's intention in adjusting the view shown in the drawing was not only to create a beautiful image, but also to reinforce the building's key design features: its relationship to the landscape and its spatial organization.

Ultimately, Wright's organic design principles informed his authorship of the Glasner House, which took the forms of engagement of the landscape, interior spatial plasticity, and drawing. These decisions can be seen as responses to the natural features of the site, the constraints of program, and the design of the house itself. Through his initial propositions, Wright created the context in which other characters later added and layered their own authorships through habitation, modification, and drawing.

64 Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture," *The Architectural Record* XXIII, no. 3 (March 1908), p 161.

A HOUSE WITHOUT A SERVANT

By C. E. PERCIVAL

A SMALL country house of quite unusual plan is that built by Frank Lloyd Wright for Mr. W. A. Glasner of Glencoe, Ill., a quiet but picturesque habitation in a wood beside one of the ravines which are a characteristic feature of Glencoe landscape,—and a feature, strange to say, that most architects utterly disregard. It is indeed hard to see why they invariably prescribe some "stock" building for their clients, instead of profiting by the opportunity these ravines offer for a fresh and picturesque treatment.

This informal and inexpensive dwelling is built in a rambling manner, accommodating itself easily to the different levels of the ground. It is one-story on the east and two-story on the west front, where the sloping bank admits of it. On the north it throws out a bridge across one of the aforesaid ravines and connects its big square porch with a charming little octagonal summer-house, perched upon the opposite knoll.

The mistress of this house largely dictated its plan. It was to be a home for two people only, husband and wife; it was to provide no accommodation for servants, as she intended to be queen of the kitchen as well as of every other part of her woman's domain. Consequently she stipulated for simplicity of arrangement; for rooms all on one floor; for a pleasant, accessible kitchen; for every convenience that would lighten the housekeeper's duties; for plenty of sunny windows. How completely she had her desire will be seen when we enter the house. But first let us survey the exterior.

The walls are of wide brown-stained undressed boards, joined together horizontally with projecting battens, that form well-marked lines and, carried about the corners as they are give strength to the wall surfaces and emphasize the well designed changes in the form of the building. It is a treatment too, that in its frank simplicity is suited to the woody environment and contrasts admirably with the close standing groups of trees. An octagonal feature on the east side is carried up to the roof and forms a sewing room, another larger octagonal room is at the south end, near the entrance, and the octagonal summer-house, already mentioned repeats this motif, giving decorative points to a design that otherwise would be devoid of ornament. All of these features nestle beneath a quiet roof and are subordinated to a broad, satisfying skyline in a way that is characteristic of the houses built by this architect.

The roof is broken only by a large substantial chimney, which serves in summer to ventilate the circulating air space. Under the wide eaves an almost continuous series of windows runs around the house. They are in groups of three, a great stationary plate in the centre to allow an unobstructed view of the lovely pictures outside, flanked on either side by a casement of decorative glass, opening outward. On the west front lower groups of windows—six together and four together—show that the ground floor will also be well lighted.

Flowerboxes along the edge of the spacious veranda on the north, flowerboxes beneath the basement windows, more flowers in a wide spreading urn on the big pier terminating the retaining wall that protects the entrance, give a gay domestic note to the exterior.

To sum up: a long, unpretentious brown building with a low-pitched, broad-eaved roof, lying at ease amid its rural surroundings, refreshingly different from the usual tall straight city house. So might a man stretch himself lovingly upon the country grass who would stand erect and alert upon town pavement.

Entering the front door one finds oneself at once in a large living room (20x27 feet) with on the left an octagonal "den" (15 feet in diameter), which more conventional occupants would probably use as a reception room. A line through the centre of the living room would terminate at one end in the den and at the other, would pass through a short hall to a door opening on the large veranda. This veranda is secluded from the road and convenient to the kitchen; access may be had from it to the summer house beyond the bridge; it is screened from insects and used in summer as a dining room whenever the weather permits. At other times the dining table is set in a corner of the living room near the kitchen door and also near enough for good cheer to the generous open hearth. This open fireplace with a built-in-seat, over which is a row of windows, occupies all one side of the living room. The opposite side is filled in with the attractive windows already described. It may be added that the leaded casements are not of an ordinary pattern but in perpendicular designs with occasional small disks and squares of color. Under them run low bookcases. The ceiling in this as

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Figure 3.1. C.E. Percival, "A House Without A Servant," *House Beautiful*, June 1906.

Chapter 3

Authoring the Plan: Cora Glasner's Challenge to Domestic Norms

The individuality of an owner is first manifest in his choice of his architect, the individual to whom he entrusts his characterization. He sympathizes with his work; its expression suits him and this furnishes the common ground upon which client and architect may come together. Then, if the architect is what he ought to be, with his ready technique he conscientiously works for the client, idealizes his client's character and his client's tastes and makes him feel that the building is his as it really is to such an extent that he can truly say that he would rather have his own house than any other he has ever seen.

- Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture"[65]

The Client

In "In the Cause of Architecture," Frank Lloyd Wright discusses the role of an important participant in the design process: the client. Consequently, because the majority of Frank Lloyd Wright's work was residential, his clients were important figures in the evolution of his designs. As Leonard Eaton has noted, the fact that Wright was able to produce such a high volume of work early in his career speaks to the relative freedom with which his clients allowed him to advance his radical architectural agenda. The Prairie Style houses challenged the organizational norms of domestic architecture at the time by removing conventional spatial divisions and conceiving of the house as an enclosure of fluid, continuous space. Therefore, these clients who hired Wright were generally progressive and forward-thinking individuals who embraced his revolutionary spatial concepts.[66]

Many of Wright's most successful early projects were the results of a fruitful alignment of his client's objectives and his architectural agenda. The commission for the Avery Coonley House in Riverside, Illinois apparently went to Wright

65 Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture," *The Architectural Record* XXIII, no. 3 (March 1908), p 162.

66 Leonard K. Eaton, *Two Chicago Architects and Their Clients: Frank Lloyd Wright and Howard Van Doren Shaw* (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1969), http://archive.org/details/twochicagoarchit00eato, p 28.

after Queene Ferry Coonley, a college graduate and an amateur architectural enthusiast, talked her husband out of pursuing a more traditional style.[67] According to Anna Rubbo, this was also one of the first instances of a woman client commanding a lead role in Wright's early designs.[68]

The iconic Robie House provides another important example of Wright's collaboration with his client. Frederick C. Robie was not only open to Wright's ideas, he approached the project with his own list of specific objectives, even providing initial sketches. These requirements included seamless interior spaces, plenty of daylight, and minimal architectural ornament, among others.[69] This project more than any other shows the ingenuity that resulted when Wright worked with an outspoken client who approached the project with specific goals for the architecture.

These examples position the patrons of Wright's early work as partners in the design process. These early clients both supported and challenged Wright's architectural ideas and provided him with a substantial body of work early in his career. More importantly, because these clients embraced the unconventional spatial configurations proposed by Wright, they engaged domestic space actively and imaginatively. In the case of the Glasner House, the input of the Glasners informed an innovative design that, while maintaining Wright's principles of organic design, also required him to consider a highly condensed program and alternate spatial arrangements.

The Glasners

Though it is not as iconic as the Coonley House or the Robie House, the Glasner House does fit a pattern of collaboration between architect and client. William Glasner was involved in banking and worked at First National Bank in Chicago. By 1904, he and his wife Cora had their eye on a parcel of land in Glencoe, on which they intended to build a summer home in the seclusion of the North Shore.[70] Some sources suggest that the commission for the house was the result of a competition sponsored by the Glasners inviting designs for an affordable and "servantless" summer cottage.[71] This initial brief would help to explain the atypical program and establishes the owners' intent for the home before Wright was involved. The couple had no children and were in their mid-forties at the time the brief was supposedly issued, and intended for the house to serve as a quiet retreat.

The Glasners lived in Chicago's Oak Park neighborhood in the years leading up to the design and construction of the Glencoe residence – the same neighborhood where Wright's studio was located, and where many of his earliest projects were executed. Thus, they would have been familiar with the type of unconventional residential architecture he was proposing.[72] Although he had been developing the prairie house since 1893, by the time the Glasners came to approach Wright for the commission in 1904, he was still formulating his philosophy of organic architecture, and had not yet explored the possibilities of the house's relationship to a complex site. This state of development suggests that the Glasners knew a Wright who may have welcomed an open process and exchange of ideas with his client in a way that helped him to refine his design philosophy.

The Glasners neatly fit the profile typical of Wright's clients around that time: self-made, middle-class, and forward-thinking, the type of client that Wright admittedly preferred to work with:

> Even cultured men and women care so

67 Leonard K. Eaton, *Two Chicago Architects and Their Clients: Frank Lloyd Wright and Howard Van Doren Shaw* (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1969), http://archive.org/details/twochicagoarchit00eato, p 83.

68 Alice T. Friedman, "Girl Talk: Marion Mahony Griffin, Frank Lloyd Wright and the Oak Park Studio," *Places Journal*, June 16, 2011, https://doi.org/10.22269/110616.

69 "Mr. Robie Knew What He Wanted," *Architectural Forum* 109, no. 4 (October 1958). p 126.

70 National Register of Historic Places, William A. Glasner House, Glencoe, Cook County, Illinois, National Register # 05000105.

71 According to the unpublished transcript of an interview with subsequent owners of the house, the budget stipulated in the competition brief was $5,000.00. Ryerson & Burnham Archives: 2001.3 Wrightiana Collection, Box 2.

72 National Register of Historic Places, William A. Glasner House, Glencoe, Cook County, Illinois, National Register # 05000105.

> little for the spiritual integrity of their environment; except in rare cases they are not touched, they simply do not care for the matter so long as their dwellings are fashionable or as good as those of their neighbors and keep them dry and warm… There are exceptions, and I found them chiefly among American men of business with unspoiled instincts and untainted ideals. A man of this type usually has the faculty of judging for himself. He has rather liked the "idea" and much of the encouragement this work receives comes straight from him because the "common sense" of the thing appeals to him.[73]

As Eaton points out, this type of client also did not yet buy into the conception of Wright as singular genius. In fact, they often engaged in respectful debate with Wright over the design of their houses.[74] The Glasners displayed the same healthy skepticism and resolve. More specifically, just as Queene Ferry Coonley had taken the lead on the design of her and her husband's home, evidence suggests that it was Cora Glasner who took the initiative in the Glasner House design.

The Authorship of Cora Glasner

A key aspect of Wright's organic design ethic was the unification of the plan, which was seen as the functional solution, and the elevation, which was seen as the formal expression.[75] With the Glasners, the primary concern was the floor plan, and Cora Glasner was clear in her positions about how it should be organized. Three articles published around the time of the Glasner House's construction will help to form a clearer understanding of Cora Glasner's role in the development of the plan. The first is the *House Beautiful* article in which Harry F. Robinson's line drawing appeared, simply titled "A House Without a Servant" (fig. 3.1). The article gives credit to Wright for the unpretentious design, seamless integration into the environment, and clever situation over the ravine – all aspects in alignment with organic design. However, this is also where Cora Glasner is first acknowledged for her role in shaping the plan:

> The mistress of this house largely dictated its plan. It was to be a home for two people only, husband and wife: it was to provide no accommodation for servants, as she intended to be queen of the kitchen as well as of every other part of her woman's domain. Consequently she stipulated for simplicity of arrangement; for rooms all on one floor; for a pleasant, accessible kitchen; for every convenience that would lighten the housekeeper's duties; for plenty of sunny windows.[76]

This excerpt suggests that the single-floor arrangement and the idea of a "servantless" house were the results of Glasner's initial requirements. It also shows her very direct influence on some more specific details of the architecture, such as the bright, unshaded, south-facing windows in the kitchen.

A second feature appeared on September 30, 1906, commanding a full page in the Sunday edition of the Tribune's "Special Features" (fig. 3.2) The headline of the article is worth briefly considering. It spans the top of the page in bold, heavily stylized type, and reads: "Chicago Woman Builds House to Solve the Servant Problem: Upset All Conventional Notions of Architecture." This headline manages to directly convey several important points. It announces the main theme of the article and the house's main point of interest: its innovative "servantless" design. It also undoubtedly casts Cora Glasner as the primary agent of this design. The article states that she not only dictated the plans, she "built" the house, claiming a leading role in its realization, and also providing a solution for households that no longer depended on servants to operate.

Like the *House Beautiful* feature, the body of the article credits Cora Glasner with the "servantless" concept for the plan, while providing more detail as to her specific stipulations. Interestingly, Wright is never mentioned. The article lists Cora's requirements for the house as follows:

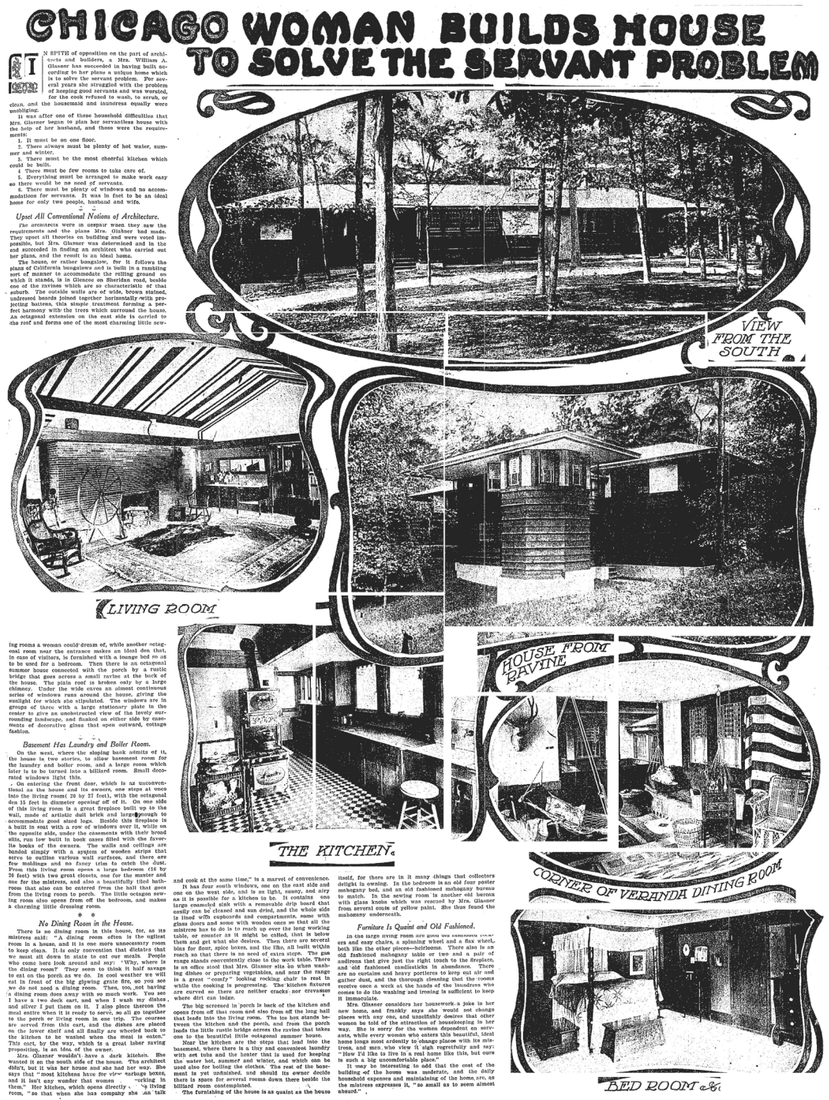
1. It must be on one floor
2. There always must be plenty of hot water, summer and winter
3. There must be the most cheerful kitchen which could be built
4. There must be few rooms to take care of

73 Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture," *The Architectural Record* XXIII, no. 3 (March 1908), p 158.

74 Leonard K. Eaton, *Two Chicago Architects and Their Clients: Frank Lloyd Wright and Howard Van Doren Shaw* (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1969), http://archive.org/details/twochicagoarchit00eato, p 61-62.

75 Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture," *The Architectural Record* XXIII, no. 3 (March 1908), p 158.

76 C.E. Percival, "A House Without A Servant," *House Beautiful*, June 1906, p 13.



CHICAGO WOMAN BUILDS HOUSE TO SOLVE THE SERVANT PROBLEM

IN SPITE of opposition on the part of architects and builders, a Chicago woman, Mrs. Glasner has succeeded in having built according to her plans a unique home which is to solve the servant problem. For several years she struggled with the problem of keeping good servants and was worried, for the cook refused to wash, to scrub, or clean, and the housemaid and laundress equally were unobliging.

It was after one of these household difficulties that Mrs. Glasner began to plan her servantless house with the help of her husband, and these were the requirements:

1. It must be on one floor.
2. There always must be plenty of hot water, summer and winter.
3. There must be the most cheerful kitchen which could be built.
4. There must be few rooms to take care of.
5. Everything must be arranged to make work easy so there would be no need of servants.
6. There must be plenty of windows and no accommodations for servants. It was in fact to be an ideal home for only two people, husband and wife.

Upset All Conventional Notions of Architecture.

The architects were in despair when they saw the requirements and the plans Mrs. Glasner had made. They upset all theories on building and were voted impossible, but Mrs. Glasner was determined and in the end succeeded in finding an architect who carried out her ideas to the letter. He is Frank Lloyd Wright.

The house, or rather bungalow, for it follows the plans of California bungalows and is built in a rambling sort of manner to accommodate the rolling ground on which it stands, is in Glencoe on Sheridan road, beside one of the ravines which are so characteristic of that suburb. The outside walls are of wide, brown stained, cypress boards, which, with the numerous flat roofs and projecting balconies, this simple treatment forming a perfect harmony with the trees which surround the house. An octagonal extension on the east side is carried to the roof and forms one of the most charming little sewing rooms a woman could dream of, while another octagonal room near the entrance makes an ideal den that, in case of visitors, is furnished with a lounge bed so as to be used for a bedroom. Then there is an octagonal summer house connected with the porch by a rustic bridge that goes across a small ravine at the back of the house. The plain roof is broken only by a large chimney. Under the wide eaves an almost continuous series of windows runs around the house, letting in daylight for which the kitchen is famous. The windows are in groups of three, with a large stationary plate in the center to give an unobstructed view of the lovely surrounding landscape, and flanked on either side by casements of decorative glass that open outward, cottage fashion.

Basement Has Laundry and Boiler Room.

On the west, where the sloping bank admits of it, the house is two stories, to allow basement room for the laundry and boiler room, and a large room which later is to be turned into a billiard room. Small decorative windows light this room.

On entering the front door, which is an unconventional as the house and its owners, one steps at once into the living room(26 by 27 feet), with the octagonal den 15 feet in diameter opening off of it. On one side of this living room is a great fireplace built up to the wall, made of artistic dull brick and large enough to accommodate good sized logs. Directly over it, which is built to rest with a row of windows over it, while on the other side of the room are casements with their broad sills, run low built in book cases filled with the favorite books of the owners. The walls and ceilings are banded simply with a system of wooden strips that serve to outline various wall surfaces, and there are few moldings and no fussy trim to catch the dust. From this living room opens a large bedroom (16 by 16 feet), with a dressing room and bath, which is reserved for the mistress, and also a beautifully tiled bathroom that also can be entered from the hall that goes from the living room to porch. The little octagon sewing room also opens from off the bedroom, and makes a charming little dressing room.

* * *

No Dining Room in the House.

There is no dining room in this house, for, as its mistress said: "A dining room often is the ugliest room in a house, and it is one more unnecessary room to keep clean. It is only convention that dictates that we must sit down to state to eat our meals. People who come here look around and say: 'Why, where is the dining room?' They seem to think it half savage to eat on the porch as we do. In cool weather we will eat in front of the big glowing grate fire, so you see we have no need of a dining room. I do not like to have a dining room down away with so much work. You see I have a two deck cart, and when I wash my dishes and silver I put them on it. I also place thereon the meal entire when it is ready to serve, so all go together to the porch or living room in one trip. The courses are served from this cart, and the dishes are placed on the lower shelf and all finally are wheeled back to the kitchen to be washed while the meal is eaten. Thus you see I have made away with a great labor saving proposition, is an idea of the owner.

Mrs. Glasner wouldn't have a dark kitchen. She wanted it on the south side of the house. The architect didn't, but it was her house and she had her way. She says that "most kitchens have for view" ...rkshop intent, and it isn't any wonder that women ...rking in them." Her kitchen, which opens directly ... living room, "so that when she has company she can talk and cook at the same time," is a marvel of conveniences.

It has four south windows, one on the east side and one on the west side, and is so light, sunny, and airy as it is possible for a kitchen to be. It contains one large commercial sized kitchen cabinet, so called, that is filled with glass doors and some with wooden ones so that all the mistress has to do is to reach up over the long working table, or counter as it might be called, that is below them and get what she desires. Then there are several bins for flour, spice boxes, and the like, all built within reach so that there is no need of extra steps. The gas range stands conveniently near the kitchen table, and there is an office arranged so that Mrs. Glasner can sit when ...ing or preparing vegetables, and near the range is a great "comfy"- looking rocking chair to rest in while the cooking is progressing. The kitchen fixtures are curved so there are neither cracks nor crevices where dirt can lodge.

The big screened in porch is back of the kitchen and opens from off that room and also from off the long hall that leads into the living room. The hot electric between the kitchen and the porch, and from the porch back to the kitchen, and from the porch down the steps to the beautiful little octagonal summer house.

Near the kitchen are the steps that lead into the basement, where there is a tiny and convenient den with ...ent tubs and the heater that is used for keeping the water hot, summer and winter, and which can be used also for boiling the clothes. The rest of the basement is yet unfinished, and should its owner decide there is space for several rooms down there beside the billiard room contemplated.

The furnishing of the house is as quaint as the house itself, for there are in it many things that collectors delight in owning. In the bedroom is an old four poster mahogany bed, and a set of old fashioned mahogany bureau to match. In the sewing room is another old bureau with glass knobs which was rescued by Mrs. Glasner from several coats of yellow paint. She then found the mahogany underneath.

Furniture Is Quaint and Old Fashioned.

In the large sewing room are gone ...ers and easy chairs, a spinning wheel and a flax wheel, both like the other pieces—heirlooms. There also is an old fashioned mahogany table or two and a pair of mahogany side tables that give just the right touch to the old fashioned mantelpiece and the andirons. There is a great cheval mirror in the bedroom, and the guest chamber, and the thorough cleaning that the rooms receive once a week at the hands of the housedress who comes in for the day washing and ironing is sufficient to keep it immaculate.

Mrs. Glasner considers her housework a joke to her new home, and frankly says she would not change places with any of her friends who complain of the burdens of housekeeping to her. She is sorry for the women dependent on servants, while every woman who enters this beautiful, ideal home longs most ardently to change places with its mistress, and as she views it sighs regretfully and says: "How I'd like to live in a real home like this, but cure to such a big uncomfortable place."

It may be interesting to add that the cost of the building of the house was moderate, and the cost of household expenses and maintaining of the home, as the mistress expresses it, "so small as to seem almost absurd."

VIEW FROM THE SOUTH

LIVING ROOM

HOUSE FROM RAVINE

THE KITCHEN.

CORNER OF VERANDA DINING ROOM

BED ROOM &c.

Figure 3.2. "Chicago Woman Builds House To Solve The Servant Problem." *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922), September 1906.

5. Everything must be arranged to make work easy so there would be no need of servants

6. There must be plenty of windows and no accommodations for servants. It was in fact to be an ideal home for only two people, husband and wife.[77]

This list, which recalls the matter-of-fact numbered lists Wright used to articulate his organic architecture and Usonian design philosophies,[78] begins to suggest a logic that might be applied by other homeowners. The list makes some of the requirements that were mentioned briefly in the previous article more explicit. The fifth point in particular illuminates how the servantless design informed the entire plan – it was a central driver that ordered space according to function.

Most of the article is dedicated to a series of exterior and interior photographs of the property. Unlike the minimal illustration of the *House Beautiful* article, these photographs are set in decorative curvilinear frames.[79] Descriptive captions, appearing to be hand-lettered, curl around the sides of the photographs. The whole effect is a collaged, scrapbook-like appearance. This decorative language is reminiscent of the aesthetic of art nouveau, which derived abstract, sinuous forms from nature (fig. 3.2).[80] Art nouveau had found its way into print and advertising at the time and had subsequently also inspired Marion Mahony's naturalistic drawing style. The aesthetic also resonates with the Arts and Crafts movement, with which Wright was associated, that gave handcraft and the decorative arts equal standing with the fine arts.

77 "CHICAGO WOMAN BUILDS HOUSE TO SOLVE THE SERVANT PROBLEM." *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922)

78 Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture," *The Architectural Record* XXIII, no. 3 (March 1908), 156-157; Frank Lloyd Wright, "The House of Moderate Cost," in *Frank Lloyd Wright: Essential Texts*, ed. Robert Twombly (New York, London: W. W. Norton, 2009), 275–81.

79 "CHICAGO WOMAN BUILDS HOUSE TO SOLVE THE SERVANT PROBLEM: Upset All Conventional Notions of Architecture. Basement Has Laundry and Boiler Room. No Dining Room in the House. Furniture Is Quaint and Old Fashioned.," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922); Chicago, Ill., September 30, 1906.

80 James Grady, "Special Bibliographical Supplement: A Bibliography of the Art Nouveau," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 14, no. 2 (1955): 18–27, https://doi.org/10.2307/987784.

This graphic language perhaps served a similar function as Mahony's nature-inspired drawings, carrying the message of organic design, and reinforcing the notion of the house's image, floor plan, and site as facets of an organic composition.

"Keeping House in Bungalow": Cora Glasner as Writer

A third and final piece appeared in the Tribune in February of 1907, this time authored by Cora Glasner herself, providing the most personal window into the everyday aspects of living in the house (fig. 3.3). At this point, the Glasners would have lived at the Glencoe residence for approximately six months. The original intent for the house to be a summer getaway seems to have been abandoned – the article implies that the house had been adopted as the Glasners' full-time residence. The article is titled, "Keeping House in Bungalow: Why We Eat in the Parlor," and in it, Cora Glasner reiterates the functional requirements laid out in the previous article, while providing more intimate details as to how the couple inhabited the space. Here, the architecture seems to be defined less by the arrangement of spaces, and more so by the day-to-day operations of domestic life:

> The rooms in which daily work is done must be centrally located. For instance, there should not be a living room at one end of a long series of rooms and a kitchen at the other. Bring living room down near to kitchen and your own bedroom close to both. I think if I made any one point prominent it would be this…A sewing room, guest room, billiard room, or studio can be located at the extremes, but never the main rooms of the family – the ones which require daily care. Group all these in or as near the center as possible.[81]

In another instance, Glasner explains that the absence of a formal dining room and its associated furnishings was compensated for by the use of a mobile cart. Meals were instead eaten in the living room, adjacent to the hearth and kitchen, or on the veranda in warmer weather:

> We have a two decked cart on which all the silver and china have been placed direct from the drying cloth. Therefore the dishes for an ordinary meal do not go into the cupboard at all, but are always ready for use. When

81 Cora Lilian Glasner, "Keeping House in Bungalow; Why We Eat in the Parlor," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922); Chicago, Ill., February 10, 1907.

Keeping House in Bungalow: Why We Eat in the Parlor

By Cora Lilian Glasner

SEPT. 30 last THE TRIBUNE printed cuts of our Glencoe bungalow. Ever since that time we have received letters of inquiry from all parts of the United States—even from Cuba. It has been impossible to reply to them in detail, so I finally have decided to write an open letter, answering as best I can questions which have been addressed personally to me.

We often are asked what we consider the essentials in order that a house may be most convenient for its owners. The man of the family laughs heartily when I solemnly explain to experienced housekeepers my methods, so I say, in self-defense, that I at least have given the subject grave and earnest thought for several years.

A small minority of THE TRIBUNE'S readers employ housekeepers; many have three or more servants which they themselves direct, and a great percentage are left periodically servantless or do their own work from necessity or choice.

It is to that latter class—the large per cent of THE TRIBUNE'S house builders and keepers —to which I direct this letter.

What, then, are, in my opinion, essentials?

* * *

Dining Room Near Kitchen.

First—The house should be on one floor.

Second—The rooms in which daily work is done must be centrally located. For instance, there should not be a living room at one end of a long series of rooms and a kitchen at the other. Bring living room down near to kitchen and your own bedroom close to both.

I think if I made any one point prominent it would be this. Every time goods are delivered at the kitchen door you do not want to run the entire length of the house to take them in, even if you have to place in front a room usually kept obscure. Our kitchen is as near the center of the house as we could bring it.

A sewing room, guest room, billiard room, or studio can be located at the extremes, but never the main rooms of the family—the ones which require daily care. Group all these in or as near the center as possible.

Third—Do away, dear friends, with your dining room if your family is small—not over two or three.

This is the subject which will provoke most criticism. Many contend the work is less with a dining room than without. I claim that depends entirely upon the way in which you serve your meals. If you must have a large table and it must be set with glasses, silver, and all which a conventional table demands, then I say have a dining room. But if you can draw up a cozy little table in front of your log fire and simply spread a cloth—not do another thing—then I say my method is labor saving to a great degree.

Food and Dishes on Cart.

We have a two decked cart on which all the silver and china have been placed direct from the drying cloth. Therefore the dishes for an ordinary meal do not go into the cupboard at all, but are always ready for use. When a meal is prepared the dessert is placed on the lower shelf of the cart, the soup, meat, and vegetables on the second and all are wheeled in together. Everything for the dinner is on the upper or lower tray and there is no running back and forth and no further work for the mistress of the house.

If you must be conventional this will not interest you, but if you like to sit in a rocking chair and eat your nuts and pare your apple; if you can even pretend to shut your eyes while the man of the family sees how near he can come to the center of the legs with his potato skins, uber cross of your dining room, buy a cart, and see how jolly and homey housekeeping may become.

Have you ever stopped to consider the cause for the wonderful sense of bon camaraderie which settles over a chafing dish table? It is because it is served where there are divans, rocking chairs, a blazing log, and a general air of comfort. But I will know the criticism this doing without dining room invites. I long ago have stopped arguing on the subject. When a woman begins to tell me the disadvantages I grant everything she has to say. I never try to convince her my way is the better. For her it would not be and I would advise her never to try it.

* * *

Fewer Rooms the Better.

One day in October a friend of ours was waiting for a train at the Glencoe station, when a woman stepped off a north bound local and asked the road to the Glasner bungalow. After giving the directions our friend added that she was a guest there.

"They remind us of a dainty little French belle in her brocaded satin and jewels seated among dames of the Martha Washington type. Both the chair and petite belle look overdressed and shy. Beautiful furniture we want, of course, but not at the expense of comfort.

In the kitchen we will have a low rocking chair and a high stool. Will you tell me, you sisters who read this, why many educated women scorn to sit on a stool and wash dishes, prepare vegetables, or cut out doughnuts? We have had intelligent guests who actually looked disgusted as they pushed our office stool one side and insisted upon standing at the work. They remind us of a dainty little French belle in her brocaded satin and jewels seated among dames of the Martha Washington type. Both chair and petite belle look overdressed and shy. Beautiful furniture we want, of course, but not at the expense of comfort.

In the kitchen we will have a low rocking chair and a high stool. Will you tell me, you sisters who read this, why many educated women scorn to sit on a stool and wash dishes, prepare vegetables, or cut out doughnuts? We have had intelligent guests who actually looked disgusted as they pushed our office stool one side and insisted upon standing at the work.

Now I can understand our good Norwegian Mary who does our laundry work and cleaning. She refused to allow me to have the ironing board placed low. She exclaimed:

"O, go 'long. I can't sit down and work."

"But, Mary, supposing I should want to iron. It would be so much easier for me."

"O, I'll do the ironing. Don't you worry."

* * *

Sit Down to Iron.

And so the argument ended. I can understand that dear soul, for she never raved herself and never will. She was not taught to. What I cannot understand is the woman of education, thought, and extensive reading who refuses to allow her brain to help her in practical everyday life. One can as well rest while washing dishes as to stand until the back aches and then carry into the living room the tired nerves and strained muscles. They are not pleasant companions around the fireside.

Finally, don't, I beg you, have a soft pillow or an article of furniture which must be treated with tender care. If a friend gives you a white satin pillow embroidered in forget-me-nots or painted in pink roses, admire it and then lay it away. Granted men of your family are similar to the one in this, then I know that white satin pillow would act as a magnet. There might be eighteen others on the divans, but only the dainty satin would prove attractive for a roll for head or foot.

Never have anything which makes you wince to see used commonly. Should a man feel more freedom at his club than in his own home? If his cigars taint the curtains, take the curtains down. I don't see why they ever were designed anyway. We make windows to see out of and to let in the light and then we cover them over with hanging lace, and silk, and muslin.

* * *

No Curtains for Windows.

I will tell you a secret. I supposed I must have curtains, so I spent some money and a great deal of time before our windows were ready to be draped. One morning I got up early and planned to have a pleasant surprise for the man of the family when he came home at night. I worked hard on stepladders, bookcase, and chair. Then I sat down and reviewed the result of my labors. I had expected to be quite overcome. The coloring certainly was beautiful, but where were God's pictures? I got up and pulled the cords until the curtains were back as far as possible. Then I sat down again, and that time nearly with tears in my eyes. Remember, I had been waving my arms aloft all day and the nerves were not as steady as—let us say, an after dining the dishes—in order to carry my point on the office stool question. So if a tear dropped do not imagine they flow at each household tragedy. To cut the harrowing scene short, I will simply say that those draperies remained up just half an hour.

I wish I might ask you all out to see our little place and possibly carry away an idea or two for a home of your own. It would not be safe for us to welcome strangers, but if you have any questions to ask you might write to THE TRIBUNE, and if I cannot answer them possibly some other who equally is interested in the housekeeping problem can and will.

* * *

Throw Away Stiff Chairs.

Let us make our worst enemy a present of all the stiff, uncompromising chairs we possess. Their little spindle legs and inlaid backs may grace some salon, but in our great homey living rooms they are oddity ill at ease.

Figure 3.3. Cora Glasner. "Keeping House in Bungalow: Why We Eat in the Parlor." *Chicago Tribune*. February 10, 1907.

> a meal is prepared the dessert is placed on the lower shelf of the cart, the soup, meat, and vegetables on top, and all are wheeled in together. Everything for the dinner is on the upper or lower tray and there is no running back and forth and no further work for the mistress of the house.[82]

Glasner also provided details about the size of her kitchen, the types of chairs and drapery that are appropriate for such a house, and the manner in which ironing was done. These details show the creativity with which the Glasners inhabited their space and tailored it to their lives. The Glasners' inhabitation of the house was not dictated by Wright but innovated by a client who challenged household norms and structured their home around a progressive notion of domesticity. At the end of her article, Cora encourages others to apply these principles to their own homes, propagating her concept of domesticity via print and extending her authorship to other households.

The Glasner House Plan: the Usonian Prairie House

Cora Glasner's requirements were integrated by Wright into a holistic design that showed an evolution from previous iterations of the prairie house plan, but still honored the principles of organic architecture. The prairie homes of this period were characterized by large, sprawling footprints and meandering floor plans that often relied on strong cross-axial schemes for spatial organization. This reads strongly in houses such as the Ward Willits, located near the Glasner House in Highland Park (1902-1903), and the Martin House in Buffalo (1904). These plans are also diagrammatic of the concept of spatial plasticity, with extending wings of domestic program converging at a central, flexible living space, anchored by a large hearth. At the Willits House, the plan reveals that the implied bilateral symmetry of the elevation is representational: in plan, the entrance is located off of the main axes, tucked between two sliding planes of exterior wall, and the wings actually pinwheel around the central core, resulting in a fluidity of interior space (fig. 3.4-3.5).[83] The Martin House reverses this condition, where the highly uniform cruciform plan results in varied perspective views on the exterior of the house (fig. 3.6-3.7).[84] These examples show a play of the organization and relationship of interior space leading up to the design of the Glasner House in 1905.

Other examples, such as the Avery Coonley House in Riverside (1908), which post-dates the Glasner House, stretch and extend the plan, resulting in a freer axial organization. The asymmetrical plan of the Coonley house consists of a series of long, narrow arms that intersect with each other and branch off of a central living space (fig. 3.8-3.9). The axial plan is pushed to an extreme, reaching across its entire site.

By contrast, the plan of the Glasner House is compact, contains few rooms, takes up proportionally little of its site, and consists of only one main axis (with the exception of the branching diagonal lines). This perhaps suggests an experimental unit, in which Wright tested the formal possibilities of the constraints imposed by a fairly small and condensed program (fig. 3.10).

Interestingly, while many of the prairie houses designated an upper floor for bedrooms, the Glasner House integrates its entire program onto a single floor. This is accomplished by using the corridor as a divider, with the kitchen, which Wright typically partitioned from the more flexible domestic spaces, to the south, and the master bedroom to the north. Thus, the kitchen and bedroom become smaller, flanking wings that push into the main volume of the house, with the central hearth offset to the south wall of the living room.

Additionally, the house lacks many spaces that were considered integral to the typical residential program of the time, particularly in terms of "food axis" spaces as suggested by Elizabeth Collins Cromley. Even though Wright was experimenting with the simplification and consolidation of program at the time, according to Cromley, Wright's early work still tended to

82 Cora Lilian Glasner, "Keeping House in Bungalow; Why We Eat in the Parlor," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922); Chicago, Ill., February 10, 1907.

83 Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p 31-33

84 Henry Russell Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials, 1887-1941: The Buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1942), caption for illustration 101.

Figure 3.4. Willits House, Highland Park, IL (1902-1903). Exterior. Henry Fuermann, photographer. In Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p 32, Illustration 31.

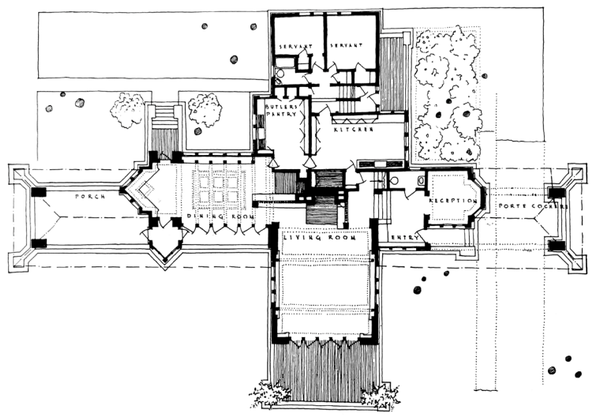


Figure 3.5. Willits House. Plan of ground floor, redrawn c. 1940. In Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p 32, Illustration 32.

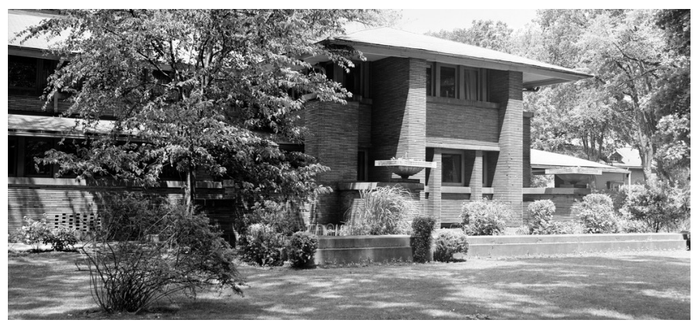


Figure 3.6. Martin House, Buffalo, NY (1904). Exterior. Wayne Andrews, photographer. (Frank Lloyd Wright. 1903-1906, Image: between 1945 and 1969. Isabelle and Darwin D. Martin House. https://library-artstor-org.libproxy.wustl.edu/asset/AWAYNEIG_10311323003.)

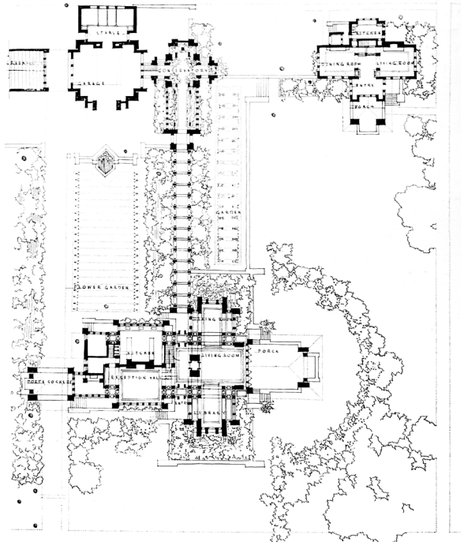


Figure 3.7. Martin House. Estate plan. In Henry Russell Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials, 1887-1941: The Buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1942), illustration 100.

Figure 3.8. The Avery Coonley House, Riverside, Illinois (1908). Exterior photograph, c. 1910. (https://library-artstor-org.libproxy.wustl.edu/asset/SS35530_35530_35451982.

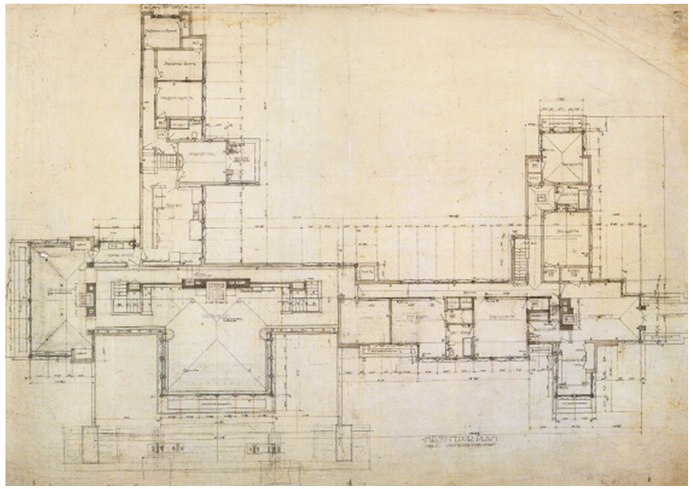


Figure 3.9. The Avery Coonley House. Floor plan. (https://library-artstor-org.libproxy.wustl.edu/asset/AWSS35953_35953_29404053.)

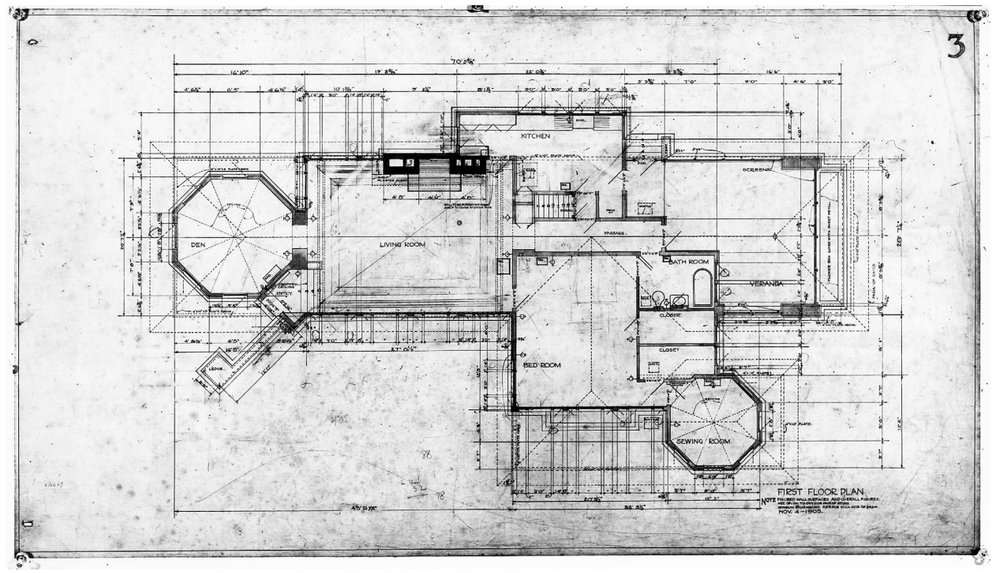


Figure 3.10. Glasner House. First Floor plan. Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, New York. Series III. 0505.007

adopt the characteristic food preparation and delivery sequence of servant-run homes in the late 1800's, including at minimum a dining room, pantry, and kitchen, sometimes with the addition of an icehouse, making the Glasner House's small kitchen and omission of a dining room atypical for the time.[85]

In fact, the plan of the Glasner House closely resembles the program of Wright's Usonian Houses. Designed mainly from the 1930's to the 1950's, these homes featured compact footprints and consolidated spaces with the goal of creating a prototypical single-family dwelling that the average American family could afford and maintain. Garages were replaced with unenclosed carports; living, dining, and cooking spaces were consolidated into a single zone with minimal divisions. Basements were eliminated and rooms were kept to one floor. Only the most economical materials were used – usually wood board and batten, which eliminated the need for painting and reduced maintenance of interior walls.[86]

Interestingly, the spatial organization of the Glasner House, with its corridor flanked by the kitchen and master bedroom and its omission of the dining room, was repeated by Wright at Taliesin.[87] The plan of Taliesin, similar to the branching plan of the Coonley House, is anchored by the compact living unit to the west. This similarity, along with the comparable treatment of the landscape, perhaps suggests that Wright may have experimented with ideas in the Glasner House that reflected his desires for his own dwelling space (fig. 3.11).

The Glasner House, with its consolidated living/dining space, single-floor arrangement, and economical construction, is a conjunction of the principles of Usonian design with the spatial plasticity and regional sensitivity of the prairie houses. Cora Glasner's insistence on

85 Elizabeth Collins Cromley, "Frank Lloyd Wright in the Kitchen," *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum* 19, no. 1 (2012): 18–42, https://doi.org/10.5749/buildland.19.1.0018.

86 Frank Lloyd Wright. "The House of Moderate Cost." In *Frank Lloyd Wright: Essential Texts*, edited by Robert Twombly, 275–81. New York, London: W. W. Norton, 2009, p 277-279.

87 Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p 84.

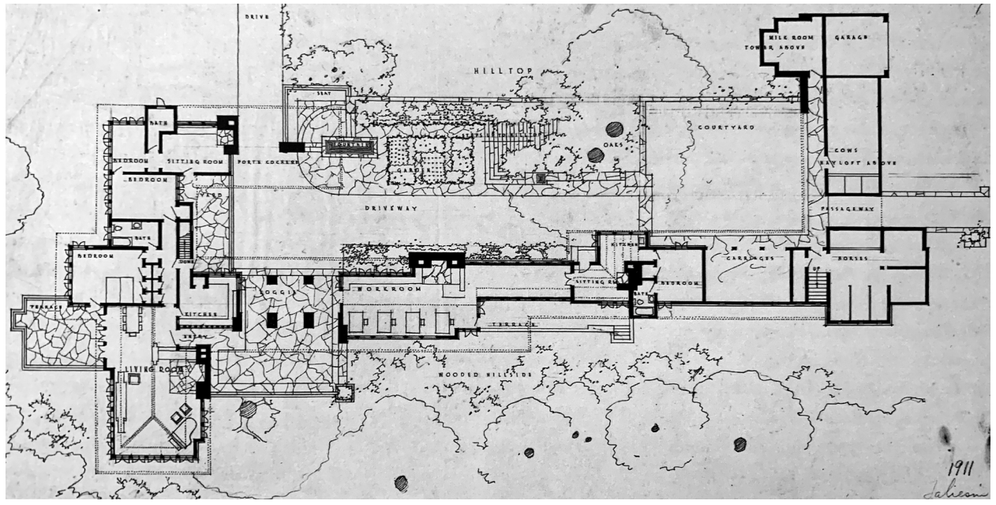


Figure 3.11. Taliesin, Spring Green, Wisconsin. Frank Lloyd Wright. Plan showing relationship of bedroom and kitchen flanking central corridor, and integrated living/dining space. (Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996, p 78.)

programmatic restraint pushed Wright into a further simplification of the plan and domestic space that he continued to evolve later in his career.

The Storybook Cottage

The floorplan of the Glasner House, unlike the grander programs of other prairie houses, was meant to accommodate a husband and wife in a simple and maintainable private retreat. The pared-down plan adjusted well to the wooded, naturally isolated site, and the resulting experience was that of a secluded and contemplative summer cottage. The Glasners' desire for the house to serve as an undisturbed summer retreat remained unchanged, though it eventually functioned as their full-time home. In her article, Glasner offers to share her progressive domestic solutions with other households, but nonetheless remains resolved to maintain a private lifestyle within a rural setting by discouraging in-person visits.

The images and descriptions from the two Tribune articles provide a glimpse into the Glasners' life in the house. They show that the Glasners filled the house with their own menagerie of furniture and objects. Within the rooms of the house, we see a spinning wheel positioned next to the warm hearth, a pair of lazy rocking chairs, hammocks swinging from the ceiling of the veranda, a four-posted bed with a ruffled canopy - all against a tranquil sylvan backdrop. Set within the scrolled frames, these images evoke a bucolic setting. The *House Beautiful* goes so far as to a describe the house in terms of a storybook metaphor:

> To sum up: a long, unpretentious brown building with a low-pitched, broad-eaved roof, lying at ease amid its rural surroundings, refreshingly different from the usual tall straight city house. So might a man stretch himself lovingly upon the country grass who would stand erect and alert upon town pavement.[88]

The author references the charming views and the cheerfulness of the flowers in the window boxes. Cora Glasner is the "Queen of her woman's domain," while the bedroom closets evoke a storybook limerick: "one for my master and one for my dame."[89] The lofty sewing room is an "eyrie overlooking the beautiful ravine." Reading these lines, it is hard to resist the feeling of being placed within a storybook scene.

The evocations of storybook imagery may seem sentimental, but they reveal an important aspect of the Glasners' authorship of their own home. They constructed an unpretentious environment, sheltered from the urban life of the city, that they took ownership of through their lived experience. The isolated retreat that the Glasners created with the help of Wright was strengthened by Cora Glasner's insistence on minimal program and pragmatic spatial arrangement. The depictions of the Glasner House in print, the Glasners' inhabitation of the house, and its organic integration into the landscape show a sympathy between the Glasners' lifestyle and Cora Glasner's vision, domestic space, and the landscape.

88 C.E. Percival, "A House Without A Servant," *House Beautiful*, June 1906.

89 C.E. Percival, "A House Without A Servant," *House Beautiful*, June 1906.

Figure 4.1. No. 6. Angophora Lanceolata, Castlecrag, from *the Magic of America*, III.06.085. Marion Mahony Griffin. Archival Image & Media Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago. https://digital-libraries.artic.edu/digital/collection/mqc/id/47841/rec/2

Chapter 4

Authoring the Atmosphere: Marion Mahony and the Role of Drawings

Art principles are analogous to scientific principles, they tell much of the body, the husk of the thing but they balk at the life, yet it is with the introduction of life that the thing becomes real and natural.

With nature and art as with human nature the absorbing feature is the heart - the soul. We are attracted by an ideal behind, the perception of which is, perhaps, subconscious but at any rate there, and our enjoyment is measured by the keenness of the perception.

- *Marion Mahony Griffin,* The Magic of America.[90]

In this excerpt from *the Magic of America*, Marion Mahony identifies certain intangible qualities – life, heart, soul – which constitute an underlying energy or "absorbing feature," that is inherent to nature, and also found in works of art. To Mahony, perception of this absorbing feature was key to the authentic experience of nature and art. This chapter will explore how this idea, which originated in Mahony's childhood and was demonstrated in her creative work, informed her authorship of the Glasner House. In her drawings, Mahony evoked the energy of the natural world through the dynamic illustration of plants and landscapes, which almost always featured prominently in her compositions. This energy was often kinetic, such as in "Angophora Lanceolata" (1925), a drawing in Mahony's Australian Forest Portrait series, in which the titular plant erupts from the landscape so exuberantly that the small house in the background almost goes unnoticed (fig. 4.1).

In Mahony's drawing of the Glasner House, she imbued the landscape and wooded environment with a more restrained energy that can be described as "atmosphere." This atmosphere is an important quality that distinguishes Mahony's architectural drawing style. In order to better understand this quality in the unfinished Glasner House drawing, the chapter will explore its foundations in Mahony's views on nature and

90 Marion Mahony. *The Magic of America*: Electronic Edition. The Art Institute of Chicago and The New-York Historical Society. IV.45

education and will examine how it was expressed in her architectural drawings and other creative activities.

Views on Nature

Throughout her life, Mahony maintained a strong interest in nature. In her architectural career, particularly her association with the Prairie School, nature served as an important model to be emulated in design. However, nature also represented ideals of individual freedom and expression that inspired Mahony's creative work.

The suburban setting of the Glasner House in the ravines and woods of Chicago's North Shore was by no means unfamiliar to Mahony. When she was only six months old, the fire of 1871 devastated most of Chicago, displacing her family. A romantic account holds that Mahony was carried from the city in a clothes basket to the northern suburb of Hubbard Woods, just a few miles from the future site of the Glasner House, where her family settled following the fire.[91]

The landscape of Chicago's suburbs looked much different in 1871 than they do today. In her memoir, *The Magic of America*, Mahony describes an untamed landscape outside of the urban center of the city:

> A kindly fate in the form of the Chicago fire drove them out, with the two babes in a clothes basket, to dwell for a decade…in the loveliest spot you can imagine, beyond suburbia – four houses and no others within a mile in any direction. Our home was at the head of a lovely ravine. A half mile walk through the beautiful forest to the east took us to the shores of Lake Michigan with bluff 50 feet high and a wide sandy beach, to the west, half a mile through scrub to the marvelous Skokie, head waters of the Chicago River, stretching for endless miles.[92]

Mahony's interest in nature was cultivated in this environment, which embodied a sense of freedom that would not have been possible in the more ordered environment of the city.

91 Janice Pregliasco, "The Life and Work of Marion Mahony Griffin," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 21, no. 2 (1995): 165–92, https://doi.org/10.2307/4102823, p 165.

92 Griffin, Marion Mahony. *The Magic of America*: Electronic Edition. The Art Institute of Chicago and The New-York Historical Society. IV.145-147. http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/index.html.

Mahony later recalled the constant presence of nature in her childhood: "We children were safeguarded by a grand Irish housekeeper and educated by that greatest of teachers - Mother Nature - and in her loveliest mood."[93] Mahony described herself as a shy and timid child. She often withdrew into the woods, fields, and bluffs near her home. In *The Magic of America*, Mahony presents a tableau of the various environments that she explored as a child. She fondly recalls climbing trees around the house; collecting seasonal flowers, berries, and nuts in the woods on her mile-long walk to school, and watching "the grandeur of the waves piling up over the sands and battering and foaming up the bluff," on the shore of Lake Michigan during summer storms.[94]

Mahony's attraction to nature took on a spiritual dimension in the 1890's, when she, her mother, and her aunt became involved in the liberal Unitarian congregation of the Church of All Souls. This group, led by the Reverend James Vila Blake, was heavily influenced by the ideas of American Transcendentalism, a philosophical and literary movement with strong spiritual overtones that emerged in New England in the early nineteenth century. A central theme of this movement, perhaps most famously articulated by Ralph Waldo Emerson in his 1836 essay, "Nature," was that all living things were connected at a spiritual level as expressions of the divine, and consequently that spiritual revelation and authority belonged to the individual:

> In the woods, we return to reason and faith… Standing on the bare ground, my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball. I am nothing. I see all. The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God.[95]

Through the influence of Transcendentalism, Mahony's early affinity for nature developed into a core belief that all living things possessed a vital energy that could be registered through

93 Marion Mahony Griffin, "*The Magic of America*: Electronic Edition" (August 2007), The Art Institute of Chicago and The New-York Historical Society. IV,147. http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/index.html.

94 Ibid.

95 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1948), p 4.

individual experience and perception – an energy that could be found in the natural world, from plants to weather and the changing seasons.

Views on Education

Mahony's adolescent years were greatly influenced by her family's commitment to education. Both of her parents were educators. Her father was a well-respected school principal. After his death in 1882, her mother worked as an elementary school principal to support the family.[96] This commitment to education extended into the home and encompassed a variety of creative activities. With Mahony's and her mother's increasing involvement in the Church of All Souls, their home became a gathering space for their cultural circle, and the family frequently hosted musical performances, art classes, theatrical rehearsals, and poetry readings.[97] Thus, the educational environment in which Mahony participated throughout her youth and young adulthood embodied creative freedom and expression.

Mahony's ideas about education merged with her ideas about nature. She referred to Mother Nature as "the greatest of teachers," and she called the suburb where she grew up "God's university."[98] She believed that the freedom associated with the natural world was conducive to learning, whereas the city was restrictive:

> Always the intimate contact with nature that is absolutely essential to the education of children (who cannot be educated in our cities as they stand) and that is so healing to the sick soul.[99]

To Mahony, environment played an important role in learning. The "intimate contact" that Mahony references in this passage can be understood as the same sort of contact that she had with natural world as a child which had promoted freedom and imagination.

In 1890, Mahony left for an architectural education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.), following the lead of her cousin, Dwight Heald Perkins. Mahony became only the second woman to graduate from M.I.T. with a degree in architecture in 1894. James Weirick notes that Mahony engaged in a curriculum of diverse subjects, from language and literature to history and social sciences.[100] Mahony was also engaged in the arts and became involved with the drama society. According to Weirick, she was the first woman to appear in a stage performance at M.I.T.[101] Theater would become an important, lifelong interest of Mahony, introducing ideas such as scene-setting, staging, and framing that would later inform her drawings.

Mahony's diverse extracurricular activities stood in contrast to the studio training that she received. The rigorous Beaux-Arts based curriculum expected grand cultural proposals such as theaters, museums, or civic buildings. Mahony's thesis project, The House and Studio of a Painter, barely passed. The thesis itself consisted of only three drawings and eleven pages of text. The project's domestic program and brevity are both telling of Mahony's objection to the Beaux-Arts pedagogy that had been imposed upon her. Despite her performance in design, Mahony excelled at drawing, and earned high marks in mechanical drawing, pen and ink, shades and shadows, and perspective.[102]

After completing her degree and returning to Chicago, Mahony occasionally supplemented her income from architectural work with teaching. In this capacity, her drawing talent was put to use illustrating books and creating art pieces for schools. She also remained active in the

96 James Weirick, "Marion Mahony at MIT. -Massachusetts Institute of Technology, United States-," *Transition: Discourse on Architecture*, no. 25 (1988), p 49.

97 Pregliasco, "The Life and Work of Marion Mahony Griffin," p 165.

98 Marion Mahony Griffin, *The Magic of America*: *Electronic Edition* (August 2007), The Art Institute of Chicago and The New-York Historical Society. IV, 147. http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/index.html.

99 Marion Mahony Griffin, *The Magic of America*: *Electronic Edition* (August 2007), The Art Institute of Chicago and The New-York Historical Society. III, 309. http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/index.html.

100 The first woman to graduate from M.I.T. with a degree in architecture was Sophia Hayden, whose career lasted only briefly in the 1890's. See James Weirick, "Marion Mahony at MIT. -Massachusetts Institute of Technology, United States-," *Transition: Discourse on Architecture*, no. 25 (1988), p 49.

101 Ibid., p 51.

102 Ibid., p 50.

creative life of the Church of All Souls. These activities show the convergence of Mahony's interests in nature, education, spirituality, and art. She consistently integrated the natural world in her illustrations and paintings. For example, Mahony's illustrations for "New Year Song," a poem penned by Reverend Blake, express the vitality of the natural world by illustrating the responses of plants, animals, and landscapes to the changing seasons. The illustrations, which are set into decorative, asymmetrical frames bearing her initials, begin to foreshadow her distinctive style (fig. 4.2).[103]

Mahony's ideas about education were also reflected in her spiritual beliefs: first in her association with the Church of All Souls, and later in life in Anthroposophy – an esoteric belief system stemming from the teachings of the Austrian philosopher Rudolph Steiner. Anthroposophy was similar to Transcendentalism in its central premise that there is a spiritual world comprehensible to humans. Its adherents believed they could access the spiritual world by training mental faculties and developing an elevated consciousness.[104] Mahony's interest in spirituality and later attraction to anthroposophy were inseparable from her creative work. After her death, a family member recalled how "… it was sometimes difficult to separate her ideas on architecture, etc. from her ideas about anthroposophy. It could be quite baffling."[105]

The influence of Anthroposophy is evident in *The Magic of America*, where Mahony discusses her idea of the "absorbing feature" and its importance to the experience of art and nature. At its core, this idea is anthroposophical in that it emphasizes the perception of an intangible quality that is capable of being learned. Mahony believed that children were particularly perceptive of the spiritual world, and even describes children

103 James Vila Blake, "New Year Song," Illustrated Poem, 1899. Ryerson & Burnham Library: Folder 1.23, Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin Collection, 2001.4. Chicago, IL

104 For a more thorough description of anthroposophy and its origins, see Carl Clemen, "Anthroposophy," *The Journal of Religion* 4, no. 3 (1924): 281–92.

105 Margery Blair Perkins correspondence re. Marion Mahony Griffin 1975. Chicago History Museum: Box 4, Series 1, Architectural records and personal papers of Dwight Perkins, 1991.0230AT ms.

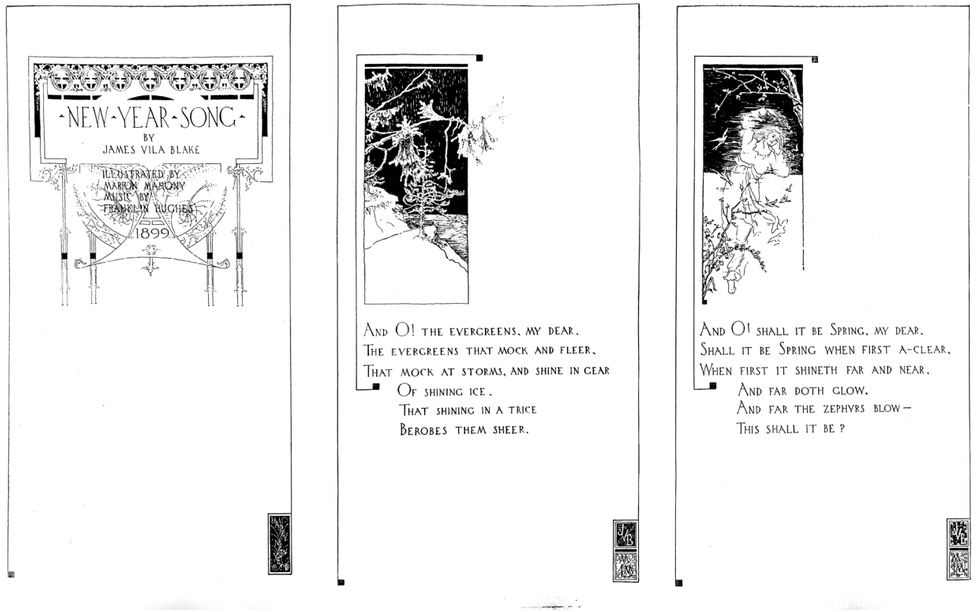


Figure 4.2. Illustrations from "New Year Song," Illustrated Poem by James Vila Blake, 1899. Marion Mahony, illustrator. Ryerson & Burnham Library: Folder 1.23, Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin Collection, 2001.4. Chicago, IL. Photographed by author.

Figure 4.3. Griffin, Marion Mahony. Fairies Feeding the Herons (1931-1932). George B. Armstrong International School, Rogers Park, Chicago. (photograph by author.)

learning to see fairies.[106] She often used fairies as representations of the spiritual world:

> For the same faculty which enables one to see the fairies is the faculty which enables one to do original work in all human realms, and to transform our community, so rich in toys and tools, into a real civilization thereby attaining great and worthwhile ends. For this, human beings must develop their spiritual powers of perception, the basis of a new form of thinking which will enable them to know causes as precisely and as thoroughly as at present they know effects.[107]

Therefore, fairies became proxies for the "life" and "soul" to be found in nature and art. One of Mahony's school murals, a large, two-panel painting titled *The Fairies Feeding the Herons* (1932), is still in place at the George B. Armstrong School in Rogers Park, Chicago. The painting embodies the convergence of the natural and the spiritual in Mahony's art. It shows a vast landscape rendered in Mahony's characteristic style of abstract planes of color. A group of fairies, somewhat camouflaged by the surrounding foliage, provides food to a nest of baby herons in the foreground (fig. 4.3).

Mahony's activities in education reveal an interesting connection between her love of nature and her creative work. She was committed to conveying the energy and spirituality of the natural world, which she believed was critical to spiritual and emotional development and wellbeing. These beliefs also formed the lens through which Mahony approached her architectural drawings.

The Oak Park Studio

After graduating from M.I.T., Mahony worked for Dwight Heald Perkins for two years before entering the office of Wright through her association with the Steinway Hall group. The ethos of this group reflected Mahony's own views – first, with its focus on residential architecture in suburban and rural settings, and second, with its reverence of nature as a model for design.[108]

106 Marion Mahony Griffin, "*The Magic of America*: Electronic Edition" III, 131.

107 Marion Mahony Griffin, "*The Magic of America*: Electronic Edition" IV, 259.

108 Brooks, *The Prairie School; Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwest Contemporaries*, 5-7.

It is therefore not surprising that when Wright transitioned his studio to his own home in the suburb of Oak Park, Mahony joined him, finding an attraction to the suburban environment and its connection to her childhood. While Oak Park was not quite the untamed environment of Hubbard Woods in the 1870's, it did provide a contrast from downtown Chicago, which at the time was experiencing the commercial building boom that fueled offices such as William LeBaron Jenney, Adler & Sullivan, and Burnham & Root.

Wright's studio embodied many of Mahony's core values. It was freer and less structured than the drafting rooms of downtown Chicago. It formed an extension of Wright's home where, with the help of Mahony, he built a close-knit staff in an informal and experimental environment. Wright himself described the studio as "our little university."[109] The studio blurred the line between domesticity, education, and professionalism, to the point that Mahony practically became a member of Wright's family, developing close bonds with Wright, his first wife, Catherine, and their children.[110]

Mahony's drawing ability flourished in the Oak Park Studio, where she was able to work with great freedom. This was partially because of the trust between Wright and Mahony. By 1906, the year when she produced the Glasner House drawing, she had spent no fewer than eleven years in Wright's employment. Professionally speaking, they were equals. Mahony had a professional degree in architecture and had been one of the first to pass the Illinois state licensure examination – neither of which Wright could claim as accomplishments.[111] G. C. Manson called her the key figure in Wright's studio, claiming that "If the studio had been organized along more conventional lines she would have held the position of 'head designer.'"[112] She was one of Wright's earliest and most reliable employees, remaining loyal to the practice throughout the Oak Park years.

Barry Byrne, who worked for Wright from 1902-1908, was a young apprentice in Wright's office around this time. One of the last living members of the Oak Park staff, his first-hand accounts have frequently been referenced by historians in reconstructing the dynamic of the studio. He later recalled the autonomy with which Mahony created her drawings:

> The style of these drawings of Miss Mahony's was determined only in a general way by Mr. Wright, he having in mind, of course, the artistic character evident in Japanese prints. The picture compositions were initiated by Miss Mahony, who had unusually fine compositional and linear ability, with a drawing 'touch' that met with Mr. Wright's highly critical approval… Conformity of these drawings to a general treatment prescribed, or stimulated, by Mr. Wright cannot be said to constitute his authorship in a manually produced work such as a drawing by another's hand.[113]

Byrne's recollection suggests that Mahony's drawings adhered to an aesthetic loosely defined by Wright, but that she developed and executed the compositions independently. Even the aesthetic character, which was based on the Japanese print, was applied by Mahony in a way that only served to complement her innate compositional ability.

Mahony had reasons to be drawn to Japanese prints apart from Wright's insistence. They often depicted plants and landscapes, both of which became major focuses in Mahony's drawings. The prints' formal basis in an underlying, organic structure can also be seen as an expression of the soul that Mahony saw in art. In his thorough analysis of the influence of Japanese art on Wright's work, Kevin Nute identifies that many of Mahony's compositions make use of a similar

109 Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture," *The Architectural Record* XXIII, no. 3 (March 1908), 164.

110 Alice T. Friedman, "Girl Talk: Feminism and Domestic Architecture at Frank Lloyd Wright's Oak Park Studio," in *Marion Mahony Reconsidered*, ed. David Van Zanten (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 36.

111 Wright received no formal training in architecture and was licensed under a "grandfather clause" when the state of Illinois initiated the examination. See Paul Kruty, "At Work in the Oak Park Studio," *Arris: Journal of the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians* 14 (2003), p 19.

112 Grant Carpenter Manson and Donald D. Walker, *Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910 : The First Golden Age* (New York, Reinhold, 1958), http://archive.org/details/franklloydwright0000mans, p 210.

113 Barry Byrne, "Review: The Drawings of Frank Lloyd Wright by Arthur Drexler," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 22, no. 2 (May 1, 1963): 108–9, https://doi.org/10.2307/988251, p 109.

underlying, often asymmetrical structure.[114] This structure can be found expressed in the justification of the drawing to the top or side of the page as identified by Pregliasco;[115] the incorporation of bold verticals and interior framing elements, usually in the form of trees; and the manipulation of the vanishing points to give the building a sense of movement, as seen in the Glasner House drawing.

Drawing Style

Mahony's contributions to Wright's practice culminated in the publication of her compositions in the *Wasmuth Portfolio*. The comparison of Mahony's original renderings with the tracings in the Wasmuth reveals an additional quality that Mahony gave to the drawings that is more challenging to define. The Wasmuth drawings, despite being beautifully executed, seem to lack the personality of the originals – they lose the atmosphere that constituted Mahony's primary contribution to the architecture, what Byrne described as her "drawing 'touch'". This atmosphere was produced by rendering the landscape in hand-drawn, curving forms and a delicate and sparse use of color, typically only in the sky. The atmosphere was usually dramatized by trees and plants that theatrically framed the view. As Janice Pregliasco notes, Mahony often used plants to create a series of "scrims" that positioned the building in the landscape and created a tension that drew the eye toward the building,[116] a technique that seems likely to have stemmed from Mahony's background in theater. These subtle yet effective techniques can be detected in some of Mahony's earliest drawings and are evident throughout her body of work.

At the same time that she was establishing herself in Wright's studio, Mahony was accepting her own commissions. Her first independent commission was a permanent building for the Church of All Souls (1903). The original design proposed by Mahony featured a spatial arrangement of overlapping rectangular and octagonal volumes, interestingly resembling the floor plan of the Glasner House. However, this plan was deemed too radical by the congregation and simplified in the final iteration of the project (figs. 4.4-4.6).[117] The drawings of the original scheme lack the finesse of Mahony's later renderings, but offer a first glimpse into the emergence of her drawing style, independent from Wright's work.

One elevation rendering shows the Church amidst a backdrop of trees and exhibits several characteristics that would define her graphic style. First, plants play an integral role in framing the architecture. The heavy tree trunks on the right and left of the image enclose the elevation, pointing our direction toward the Church at the center, reminiscent of the way in which trees frame the mountainous landscape in Hiroshige's Maples at Mamma (see fig. 1.1). Second, the flatness of the image is indicative of Mahony's first attempts to depict space as a series of receding parallel layers. The elevation-like view flattens the octagonal volume that projects from the front of the church. A feeling of depth is created through shading and the differentiation of distinct foreground, midground, and background planes (fig. 4.7).

These qualities were refined in the rendering for Unity Temple in 1905. Like the drawing of the Church of All Souls, the view is framed by trees at either side of the image, establishing the foreground plane. However, unlike the elevation view of All Souls, the building is shown in a skewed two-point perspective, which was typical of the renderings Mahony produced for Wright. One vanishing point lies well beyond the left edge of the page, while the other is located within the enclosure of the building itself. This perspective keeps the front of the building nearly parallel to the viewer, emphasizing the horizontal line, while adding a subtle sense of rotation to the image. Mahony's use of color is also more abstract than the Church of All Souls drawing. The sky and trees are rendered in uniform, dark brown tones, creating a moody atmosphere, while the building is accented with bright white highlights (fig. 4.8).

114 Kevin Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan: The Role of Traditional Japanese Art and Architecture in the Work of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993), p 95.

115 Janice Pregliasco, "The Life and Work of Marion Mahony Griffin," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 21, no. 2 (1995): 165–92, https://doi.org/10.2307/4102823, p 169.

116 Ibid.

117 Anna Rubbo, "Marion Mahony: A Larger than Life Presence," in *Beyond Architecture: Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin in America, Australia, and India* (Powerhouse Publishing: Sydney, 1998), p 51.

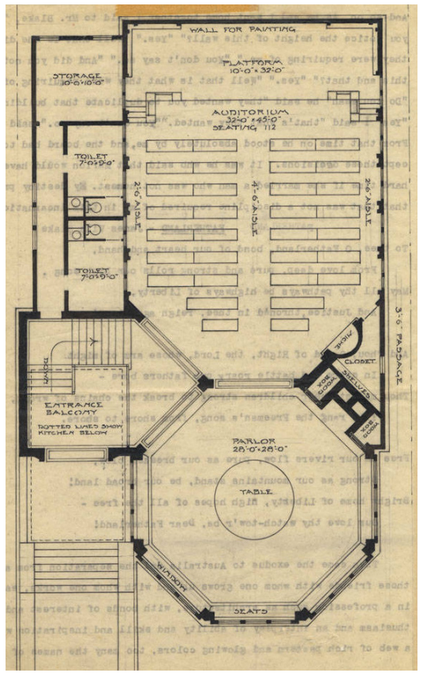


Figure 4.4. Church of All Souls, Evanston, Illinois (1903). Marion Mahony Griffin. Plan of unbuilt scheme, from *The Magic of America*, IV.07.166-2. Archival Image and Media Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago. https://digital-libraries.artic.edu/digital/collection/mqc/id/48443/rec/10

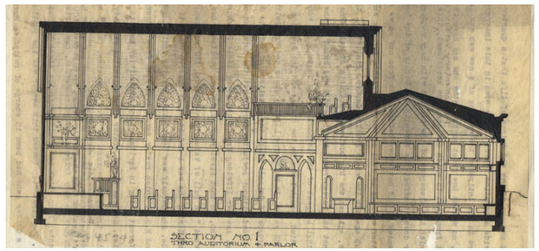


Figure 4.5. Church of All Souls, Evanston, Illinois (1903). Marion Mahony Griffin. Section of unbuilt scheme, from *The Magic of America*, IV.07.168-2. Archival Image and Media Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago. https://digital-libraries.artic.edu/digital/collection/mqc/id/48388/rec/1

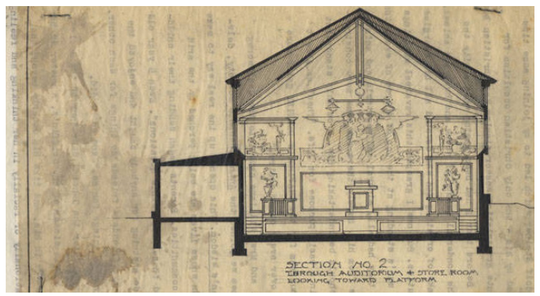


Figure 4.6. Church of All Souls, Evanston, Illinois (1903). Marion Mahony Griffin. Section of unbuilt scheme, from *The Magic of America*, IV.07.169-2. Archival Image and Media Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago. https://digital-libraries.artic.edu/digital/collection/mqc/id/48389/rec/2

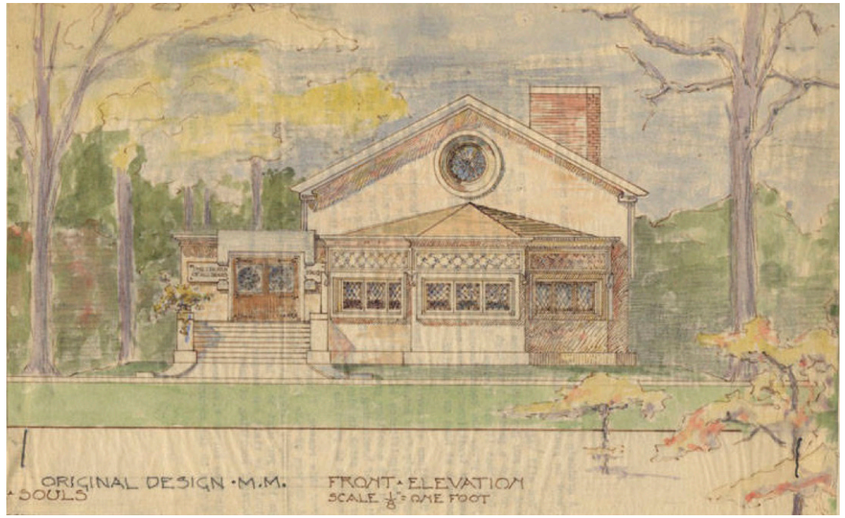


Figure 4.7. Church of All Souls, Evanston, Illinois (1903). Marion Mahony Griffin. Front elevation of unbuilt scheme, from *The Magic of America*, IV.07.164-2. Archival Image and Media Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago.

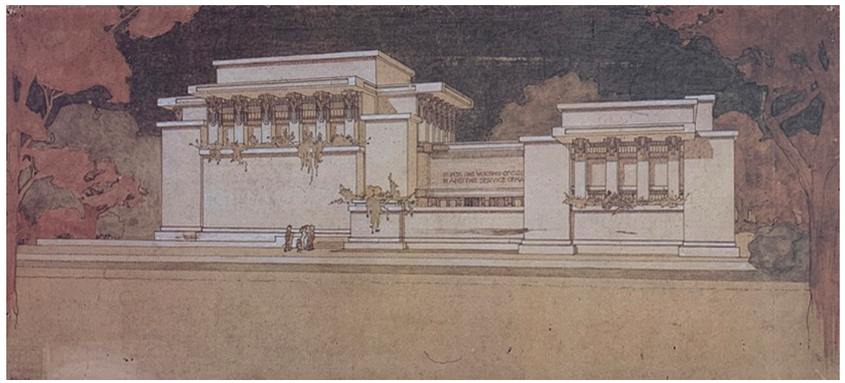


Figure 4.8. Perspective rendering of Unity Temple, Oak Park, Illinois (1905). Marion Mahony (delineator). Frank Lloyd Wright, *Selected Drawings Portfolio* New York: Horizon Press, 1977). Photographed by author.

Figure 4.9. Presentation drawing of the K.C. DeRhodes House, South Bend, Indiana (1906). Marion Mahony, delineator. (Anne Watson, ed., *Beyond Architecture: Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin: America, Australia, India*, p 50.)

The DeRhodes House Rendering is considered by Paul Kruty to be the first fully developed example of Mahony's mature style.[118] Similar to the Unity Temple rendering, the view is slightly rotated to the right, with the subtle hint of perspectival recession leading the eye into the flanking volume at the right of the page. Here, Mahony uses plants to their fullest effect to frame the view. The trees step back in a series of discrete layers that mark the foreground, midground, and background. The architecture sits organically amid the abstract planes of the landscape. The only color in the drawing occurs in the patch of light blue sky beyond the house. The limited use of color tinges the image with atmosphere, while the materiality of the architecture remains unrendered (fig. 4.9).

The style that was developed in the Unity Temple and DeRhodes House renderings was used most dramatically in the renderings for the Hardy House (1906). The Hardy House is located at the top of a bluff in Racine, Wisconsin, allowing for a dramatic view of the house from the lakeshore below. The street level view, signed by Mahony, exhibits the familiar, slightly rotated perspective of Unity Temple and the DeRhodes House (fig. 4.10). However, the lake side view – one of Mahony's most famous compositions – is rendered in a narrow, vertical aspect, about four times its width in height. The house itself sits near the upper edge of the image, the picturesque asymmetry contrasting the symmetry of the plan (fig. 4.11-4.12). In both renderings for the house, as in the DeRhodes House, color is used sparingly. The planar geometry of the house is accented with white highlights, while the sky is lightly tinted with color, suggesting a soft, diffuse glow.

From the Church of All Souls to the Hardy House, Mahony's drawing style evolved from representational to abstract and atmospheric, as seen in her use of perspective, which increasingly used the landscape to create dynamic views; the use of plants to depict space as a series of discrete layers; and the application of color, which was used more sparingly in the later renderings, and set the tone of the rendering rather than representing materiality.

118 Paul Kruty, "Graphic Depictions: The Evolution of Marion Mahony's Architectural Renderings," in *Marion Mahony Reconsidered*, ed. David Van Zanten (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 66.

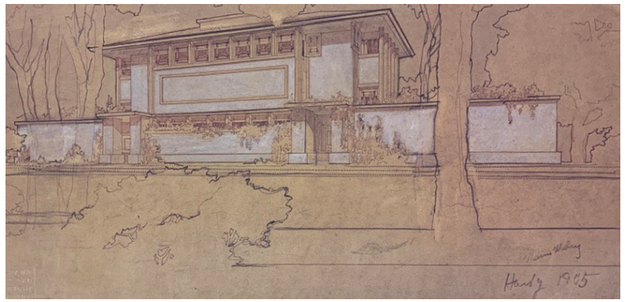


Figure 4.10. Presentation rendering and detail of the Hardy House, Racine, Wisconsin (1905). Marion Mahony, delineator. Frank Lloyd Wright, *Selected Drawings Portfolio* New York: Horizon Press, 1977), plate 61. Photograph by author.

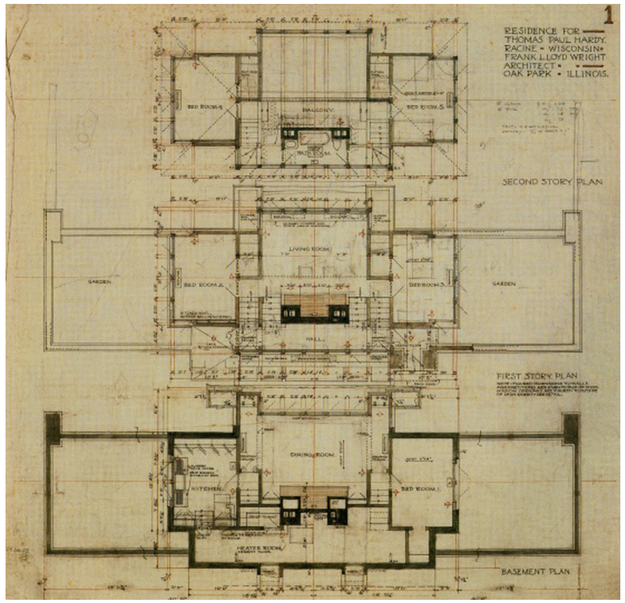


Figure 4.11. Thomas P. Hardy House, Racine, Wisconsin (1905). Frank Lloyd Wright. Plan. [https://library-artstor-org.libproxy.wustl.edu/asset/AWSS35953_35953_29403959.

Figure 4.12. Perspective rendering of Thomas P. Hardy House, Racine, Wisconsin (1905). Marion Mahony (delineator). Frank Lloyd Wright, *Selected Drawings Portfolio* New York: Horizon Press, 1977), plate 109. Photograph by author.

Mahony created the Glasner House drawing in 1906, the year after the Hardy House rendering. The atmosphere of the drawing was to take on a different meaning at the Glasner House, which was located just miles from Hubbard Woods, in the natural environment with which Mahony communed in her childhood.

As with the Hardy House, in the Glasner House drawing, Mahony uses the complex topography strategically. In order to emphasize the depth of the ravine, she positions the viewer at the bottom and pushes the house to the top edge of the page, letting the ravine dissipate toward the bottom of the page. The outlined forms of the bushes in the ravine distance the viewer and direct the eye toward the house.

Mahony imparted an atmospheric quality to her drawing of the Glasner House that was absent in Louis Rasmussen's original watercolor. In Mahony's drawing, as in her other renderings, the trees and plants are energized and serve as important compositional elements. The silhouetted trunks of trees that appear to shoot up from the ravine serve a dual purpose: they mark the midground and position the house within the wooded setting, and also provide a vertical contrast to the horizontality of the architecture. Mahony's "touch" also contributes to the quality of the drawing. The outlines of bushes and foliage around the house are freely hand-drawn. As these recede into the background, they encircle the house in rippling, cloud-like volumes.

Based on her knowledge of the landscape, Mahony gave a dynamic and ethereal quality to the Glasner House drawing through her treatment of the vegetation and her intuitive drawing touch. Unfortunately, the drawing lacks the nuances of color, lineweight, and shading that complete the atmosphere of Mahony's other renderings. Because the principles that informed Mahony's drawings remained consistent throughout her life, instances of her later work can help to shed light on the kind of atmosphere she began creating in her drawing of the Glasner House.

Collaboration with Walter Burley Griffin

After Wright departed for Europe in 1909, dissolving the Oak Park Studio, Mahony next

Figure 4.13. Rock Crest-Rock Glen, Mason City, Iowa (1912). Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin. Aerial perspective. Marion Mahony Griffin (delineator). (https://library-artstor-org.libproxy.wustl.edu/asset/AMCADIG_10313213663.)

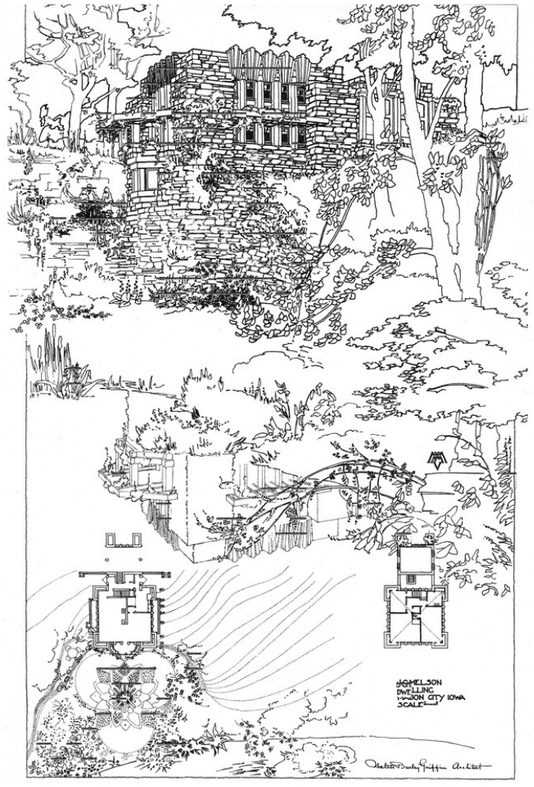


Figure 4.14. Perspective drawing of J.G. Melson House, Mason City, Iowa (1912). Marion Mahony Griffin (delineator). (https://library-artstor-org.libproxy.wustl.edu/asset/AMCADIG_10313213664.)

dedicated her drawing talent to the work of Walter Burley Griffin. Griffin, who had also been a member of the Oak Park Studio, established his own practice in 1906, after a dispute with Wright concerning his compensation.[119] Griffin's independent practice was equally concerned with landscape design and planning as it was with architecture. Griffin's landscape designs followed an ideology that can be best described, as Christopher Vernon characterizes it, as "picturesque naturalism." This concept, which originated with the eighteenth-century British philosophy of the picturesque landscape, was adapted by Griffin and applied through deference to native topography, and unification of architecture, landscape, and plantings to create an organic whole.[120]

Griffin and Mahony formed a professional and personal relationship and were married in 1911. The work that Mahony had begun in Wright's office of engaging the landscape to frame dramatic views of architecture continued in Griffin's practice in support of his landscape work. Mahony's drawing style was applied to conveying the ideas of picturesque naturalism, such as the renderings she produced for the planned community of Rock Crest-Rock Glen in Mason City, Iowa. Here, Griffin designed a series of stone houses set into the irregular topography of a former quarry, transforming the neglected industrial site into a picturesque community that seemed to grow out of the site's natural geology.[121] Mahony produced drawings both of the overall community plan and the individual houses within it. In her drawing of the J.G. Melson house at Rock Crest-Rock, Mahony again strategically emphasizes the house's situation on a bluff embankment using a view from below, like the Hardy and Glasner Houses. However, most of the drawing is given over to the landscape.

119 Paul Kruty, "At Work in the Oak Park Studio," *Arris: Journal of the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians* 14 (2003), p 21.

120 Christopher Vernon, "The Landscape Art of Walter Burley Griffin," in *Beyond Architecture: Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin in America, Australia, and India* (Sydney: Powerhouse Publishing, 1998), p 91.

121 Christopher Vernon, "The Landscape Art of Walter Burley Griffin," in *Beyond Architecture: Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin in America, Australia, and India* (Sydney: Powerhouse Publishing, 1998), p 91.

Mahony frequently used this compositional strategy in her drawings for Griffin's projects. As in "Angophora Lanceolata," the building perspective and even the plans, which are significantly scaled down, seem almost hidden within the abundant landscapes (figs. 4.13-4.14).

Griffin and Mahony began their most significant project in 1911, when they entered a design competition for the capital city of Canberra, Australia. Mahony produced the winning drawings for the competition entry, which was planned around the geographical features of the site, which occupies a large valley. The principle organizing axes are oriented toward three nearby mountains. Mahony's plan drawing of the capital renders the topography in a subtle sepia-toned gradient, while the city plan sprawls organically around and in between the peaks (fig. 4.15).[122]

Mahony's drawings for Canberra express the sprawling site in a series of sweeping, panoramic sections, beautifully rendered in light washes of watercolor and gouache, with the added brilliance of gold paint. At this scale, the buildings form a uniform fabric, secondary to the natural beauty of the site's topography (fig. 4.16-4.18). One of the most striking drawings is an aerial perspective of the city from the summit of nearby Mount Ainslie. Drawn across three panels, it is one of Mahony's most delicately rendered drawings. The linework is precise but faint, causing the carefully planned grid of the city to fade into the surrounding landscape. As in Mahony's later renderings for Wright, the use of color is purely atmospheric: the image is washed in subtle tones of blue, green, and yellow, evoking a hazy atmosphere (fig. 4.19).

Creative Activities in Castlecrag

In Australia, the Griffins lived in Castlecrag, a utopian suburban community of their own design just outside of Sydney. Castlecrag was built on a landscape of promontories and valleys, resembling the ravines and bluffs of Chicago's north shore and the jagged bluffs of the Rock Crest-Rock Glen quarry. It was in fact a continuation of the naturalist sensibilities of Rock Crest-Rock Glen (fig. 4.20-4.21).

122 James Weirick, "Spirituality and Symbolism in the Work of the Griffins," in *Beyond Architecture: Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin in America, Australia, and India* (Sydney: Powerhouse Publishing, 1998), p 65.

Figure 4.15. Commonwealth of Australia Federal Capitol Competition, plan of city and environs (1911-1912). Marion Mahony Griffin (delineator). National Archives of Australia: A710, 38.(https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=4185428).

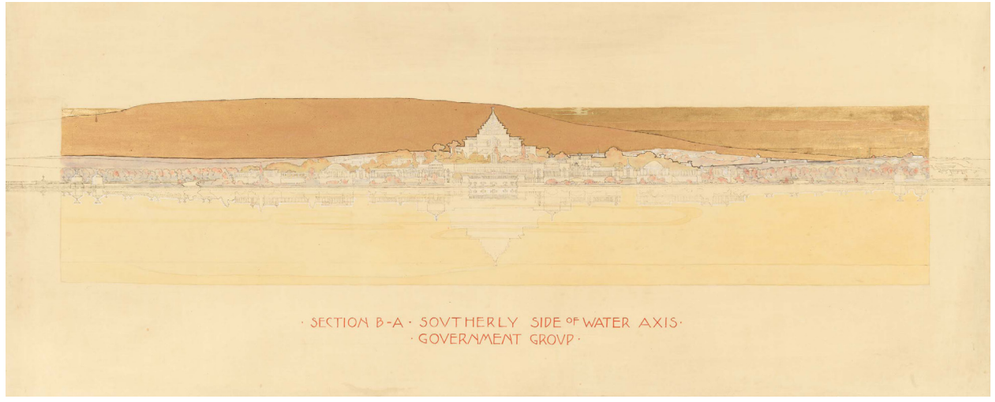


Figure 4.16. Commonwealth of Australia Federal Capitol Competition, Section B - A: southerly side of water axis government group (1911-1912). Marion Mahony Griffin (delineator). National Archives of Australia: A710, 43.(https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=4185433).

Figure 4.17. Commonwealth of Australia Federal Capitol Competition, Section (1911-1912). Marion Mahony Griffin (delineator). National Archives of Australia: A710, 41.(https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=4185431).

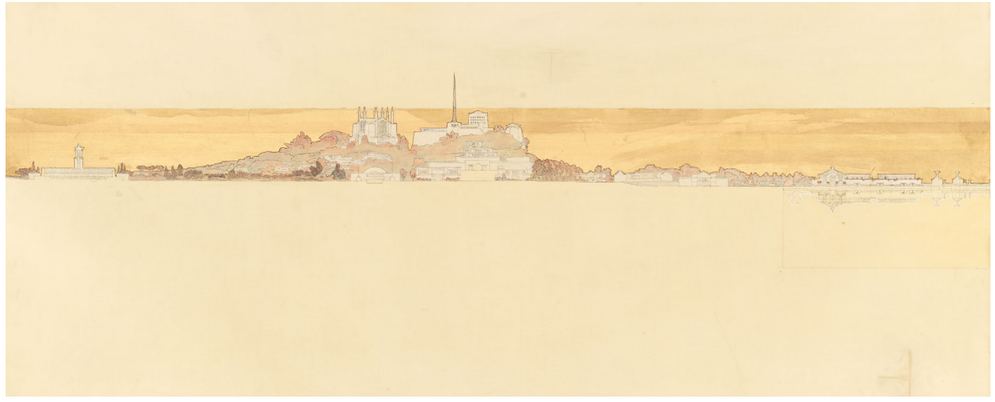


Figure 4.18. Commonwealth of Australia Federal Capitol Competition, Section C - D easterly side of land axis Ainslie to Red Hill (1911-1912). Marion Mahony Griffin (delineator). National Archives of Australia: A710, 44.(https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=4185434).

Figure 4.19 Commonwealth of Australia Federal Capitol Competition, View from summit of Mount Ainslie (1911-1912). Marion Mahony Griffin (delineator). National Archives of Australia: A710, 48. (https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=31707702).

Figure 4.20. Photograph of the coastline of Castlecrag, New South Wales. Marion Mahony Griffin. Archival Image and Media Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives

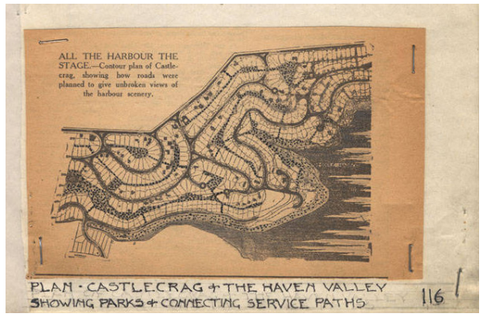


Figure 4.21. Map of Castlecrag, New South Wales. Marion Mahony Griffin. Archival Image and Media Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives

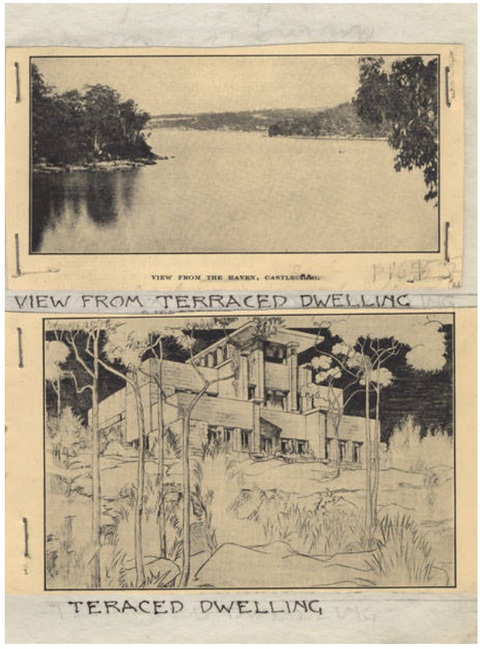


Figure 4.22. R.H. Hosking Residence, Castlecrag, New South Wales. Walter Burley Griffin. Perspective drawing. Marion Mahony Griffin (delineator). Archival Image and Media Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago.

Griffin's picturesque design and Mahony's refined drawing style translated to this distant yet familiar landscape. Houses were embedded into the natural topography and oriented toward picturesque views of the surrounding ravines and inlets, providing Mahony Griffin with additional opportunities to experiment with the pictorial relationship of building to site as she created drawings for the homes being designed for the community. A drawing of the R.H. Hosking Residence in Castlecrag, appearing as an illustration in *the Magic of America* and simply captioned, "Terraced Dwelling," shows yet another iteration of the Glasner House composition. The house, composed of a series of vertical and horizontal planes forming stepped terraces, is rotated forty-five degrees to the viewer and seen from the bottom of an embankment. Like the Glasner House, the architecture is shifted to the upper edge of the image and looks out across the adjacent inlet. An accompanying photograph supposedly shows the view offered from the house's terraces (fig. 4.22).

Mahony continued to practice architecture with Griffin in Australia, but theater gradually became the focus of her activities in Castlecrag. Here, as in her childhood, she found creative freedom in the more natural setting of the suburbs. At Castlecrag, Mahony's creative work centered on the Haven Valley Scenic Theatre. Haven Valley had been portioned off as a natural sanctuary during the development of Castlecrag and was transformed into an open-air theater where Mahony produced and directed numerous plays in events that she referred to as "Anthroposophic Festivals." These festivals were meant to "awaken a greater consciousness of the significance of the seasons, at Castlecrag."[123] Reflecting her ideas on education, the plays were opportunities to make others aware of the vital energy of nature, embodied by the seasons. The productions took full advantage of the natural topography of Haven Valley. In *the Magic of America*, Mahony describes the use of the landscape in the theatrical productions:

> And the rocks! The Iphigenia rock! That top promontory where Iphigenia gave her invocation to the sea - with its precipitous drop; and the cave below where in a later play

123 Marion Mahony Griffin, "*The Magic of America*: Electronic Edition." III, 430. http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/index.html.

> Everyman was laid in burial. The winding path down around the huge leaning tree on whose great sloping boll the aboriginal goddess of the honey sweet grass-tree slept till man, redeemed, found her and all nature came to life again, and around to the Demeter rock, on the terrace below, where in this same aboriginal play the Bat, full of Satanic fervor gloated over the fall of man as he yielded to temptation after the Stream led him down the valley to the South.[124]

The landscape provided an opportunity to stage dramatic scenes. *The Magic of America* manuscript includes a series of photographs from the performances. The photographs are taken at night, silhouetting the landscape features with dramatic lighting, and often exhibit a smoky or hazy atmosphere. One photograph in particular from the production Iphegenia interestingly echoes many of the characteristics found in her Glasner House drawing years earlier. Inhabiting the view of an audience member, we gaze up at the set from the bottom of the valley, distanced from the stage by the sloping terrain. Plants and trees in the foreground frame the action of the play within a temple-like structure positioned near the top of the photograph, which projects out over the valley (figs. 4.23-4.24).

The Authorship of Marion Mahony

Mahony's drawings are a distinct form of authorship, adding an atmosphere that enriched the image of the architecture. They can be likened to the "answering text" hypothesized by George Steiner:

> To read essentially is to entertain with the writer's text a relationship at once recreative and rival. It is a supremely active, collaborative yet also agonistic affinity whose logical, if not actual, fulfillment is an 'answering text.'[125]

Mahony, whose talents almost entirely supported the work of others, reconstructed and enhanced their buildings through the act of drawing. The drawing of the Glasner House shows that this was a layered and intuitive process.

From an early age, Mahony was attuned to a certain dynamic energy in the natural world, and she made it her project to evoke this energy

124 Marion Mahony Griffin, "*The Magic of America*: Electronic Edition." III, 431. http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/index.html.

125 George Steiner, "Text and Context," *Salmagundi*, no. 31/32 (1975), p 175.

Figure 4.23. Miscellaneous photographs of Haven Valley Scenic Theatre performances. Marion Mahony Griffin, *the Magic of America*. Archival Image and Media Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago.

Figure 4.24. Photographs of Haven Valley Scenic Theatre performance of Iphigenia in Taurus. Marion Mahony Griffin, *the Magic of America*. Archival Image and Media Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago.

in her creative work, which encompassed theater, illustration, painting, and drawing. In her architectural drawings, the energy of nature was expressed through the delicate use of line and color. Rather than solely highlighting the architectural subject, Mahony activated plants and landscapes to create a dynamic atmosphere and serve as a counterpoint to the architecture.

Mahony strategically engaged the landscape of the Glasner House in her drawing. From her engagement with nature as a young child, Mahony understood that landscapes played an important role in creating atmosphere, and began using them in her visual work, from illustrations to drawings and paintings. She specifically used landscapes, such as the ones found at the Glasner House, Rock Crest-Rock Glen, Canberra, and finally Haven Valley, to create evocative compositions in her architectural drawings. Therefore, Mahony's authorship of the Glasner House entailed an intimate understanding of the landscape and environment, which are essential to the experience of the house, and the layering of her individual drawing style to bring out the atmospheric quality of the site.

Chapter 5

Authoring the Landscape: Elizabeth Kimball Nedved and the Act of Framing

The landscape is one of the defining features of the Glasner House's architecture. It informed the placement of the house on the site, helped to structure its spatial relationships and organization, and informed the perspective of the rendering. The defining feature of the landscape is the ravine. It bisects the one-acre site, isolating the southeast corner where the house is situated.

In its present state, the bank of the ravine is truncated at the base of the house by what might be called "table land," forming a flat shelf or tabula rasa from which the architecture ascends. Traces of the native landscape can be found embedded in the architecture. The concrete base that stumbles around the perimeter of the house indicates the profile of the original slope. About twelve inches of foam insulation against the foundation is an indication of where earth was excavated to equalize the grade. Currently, the flattened ground swallows all but a few inches of the concrete watertable beneath the sewing room "eyrie" (figs. 5.1-5.3).

These remnants of the original landscape confirm that the intervention was unoriginal to Wright's design, which initially left the landscape untouched, as seen in the 1906 photograph of the house. There are no landscape drawings associated with the project. Indeed, this hands-off approach to landscape is consistent with most of Wright's designs from around the same time. Landscape interventions were uncommon – most prairie style homes were built on relatively flat, suburban sites; therefore, andscape was most often managed through architectural means.[126] His minimal approach seems appropriate

126 Christopher Vernon, "'Expressing Natural Conditions with Maximum Possibility': The American Landscape Art (1901-c. 1912) of Walter Burley Griffin – Part One," *Landscape Australia* 17, no. 2 (66) (1995), p 135.

Figure 5.1. Glasner House. View from bridge over the ravine (Sheridan Rd.). Photograph by author.

Figure 5.2. Glasner House. Exterior view from "table ground," looking southwest. Modifications to the slope of the terrain are evident at the concrete base. Photograph by author.

Figure 5.3. Glasner House. Exterior view, enclosed porch and garage from the South. The slope of the ground is echoed in the stepping of the concrete base. Photograph by author.

to the idea of "organic architecture," where the architecture emerges from and defers to nature. Therefore, the idea of "table land" seems antithetical to Wright's design, in that it renders the steeply sloping ravine side similar to the relatively flat street side: it interrupts the emergence of the house from the embankment and alters the spatial relationship of architecture and site. These modifications were made by an author with specific intent, engaging the ideas of nature and atmosphere already established at the Glasner House.

The Nedveds

The Glasner House's landscape modifications were the work of Rudolph Nedved and Elizabeth Kimball Nedved, a husband and wife who became the second owners of the Glasner House in 1928. The Glasners relocated for health reasons in 1923, and the house remained vacant for five years before it was purchased by the Nedveds. The Nedveds were both architects, and met during their school years at the Armour Institute of Technology, now the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) in Chicago, where they studied in the 1920's.

Rudolph J. Nedved was born in Austria Hungary, in what is now the Czech Republic, and immigrated to the United States in 1906 at the age of eleven. As a young man, Nedved worked as a draftsman in various Chicago architectural practices before entering architecture school at the Armour Institute and graduating in 1921. After traveling in Europe with Elizabeth, in 1924, Rudolph accepted a teaching position at the Armour Institute, his alma mater.[127] In 1926, he was elected president of the Chicago Architectural Sketch Club and the Chicago Architectural Exhibition League. Thereafter, he and his wife practiced together for most of the rest of their careers. They opened an independent practice in 1927, and both became partners in the Chicago architectural firm of Hamilton, Fellows, & Nedved, establishing the office's residential department. Rudolph later served as president of the Illinois Society of Architects.

127 Hasbrouck, *The Chicago Architectural Club: Prelude to the Modern*, 622.

Elizabeth Kimball was a Glencoe native, and grew up just a short distance from her future home. Her name is not well known today, although, like Marion Mahony, she was a pioneer in the profession of architecture. She was among the first women to receive an architecture degree from the Armour Institute in 1925, and subsequently the first woman admitted to the Chicago chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1927.[128] She later served as the president of the Women's Architectural Club of Chicago in 1931. Elizabeth was also involved in the Chicago Architectural Club, teaching a watercolor course offered to members.[129] She advocated for women's involvement in the profession as essential voices in design, and embodied this sentiment through her active leadership in the profession.[130]

The Nedveds' biographies portray a couple who were well-educated with diverse interests, were active leaders in the profession, and were committed to education and development through their involvement in academia and professional organizations. Yet, they did not conform to expectations of the profession – especially Elizabeth, who helped to pioneer a role for women in architecture.

Drawings and Travels Abroad

In 1923, Nedved won the Chicago Travelling Scholarship, awarded by the Chicago Architectural Club. He and Elizabeth traveled to Europe, where they married, and subsequently embarked on an itinerary of travel. This period had seen a renewed interest in travel as a component of architectural study, supported by organizations like the Chicago Architectural Club. Club members were encouraged to sketch and learn from foreign historical styles and share accounts of their travels with the club body.[131] Thus, drawing and sketching became the fundamental tools in both analyzing historical styles and recording these findings. To the Nedveds' generation of architects, reading architectural form was synonymous with the drawn image.

The Nedveds' destinations in Europe were varied. Their travel sketches indicate that they visited traditional architectural pilgrimage sites, such as Rome and Venice, as well as destinations in eastern Europe. Thus, the architectural environment in which they were immersed was constantly renewed. Both Rudolph and Elizabeth drew and sketched during their travels. Their compositions appeared in Chicago Architectural Club exhibition catalogs, as well as publications such as the drafting journal *Pencil Points* between 1905 and 1907.

Elizabeth Nedved was already a proficient watercolorist, demonstrating considerable skill during her student years at the University of Illinois, where she had attended prior to transferring to the Armour Institute in 1923. One of her student compositions was entered in the Chicago Architectural Club Catalog in 1923 and shows a design for a "Medieval Dining Hall." The drawing is balanced and carefully composed, featuring building components, details, and views at multiple scales. The image is neatly framed by a large gothic arch in the foreground (fig. 5.4)

The idea of framing continued, though in a more subtle way, in Elizabeth's travel sketches. The handful of watercolors featured in exhibition catalogs show carefully composed views, a play of volume, light, and shadow, and a relationship of foreground, midground, and background. Often, buildings are positioned at an angle to the viewer. The sketches feature urban spaces rather than individual buildings, perhaps appealing to Elizabeth due to their image-like quality (fig. 5.5). However, a distinction should be made between the image-like quality of Nedved's drawings and the pattern-like quality of Mahony's. Nedved, who uses spatial devices such as mass and shadow, stops short of the abstraction that

128 "Armour to Give Woman Degree in Architecture," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1923-1963); Chicago, Ill., May 28, 1925; "Mrs. Nedved Is First Woman A I A Member," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1923-1963); Chicago, Ill., August 21, 1927, sec. PART 3.

129 Hasbrouck, 559.

130 Marion Reagan, "This Woman Has Both a Career and a Husband: She and He Forge to Front as Architects.," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1923-1963); Chicago, Ill., May 6, 1928.

131 Wilbert R. Hasbrouck, *The Chicago Architectural Club: Prelude to the Modern* (New York, N.Y: Monacelli Press, 2005), 275.

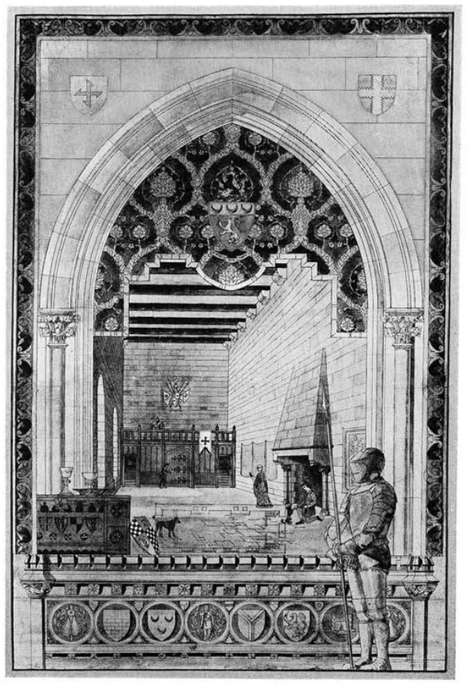


Figure 5.4. "A Medieval Dining Hall." Elizabeth Kimball Nedved, 1923. Archival Image & Media Collection, Ryerson & Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago

Figure 5.5. "Mala Strana, Praha." Elizabeth Kimball Nedved, 1926. Archival Image & Media Collection, Ryerson & Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago.

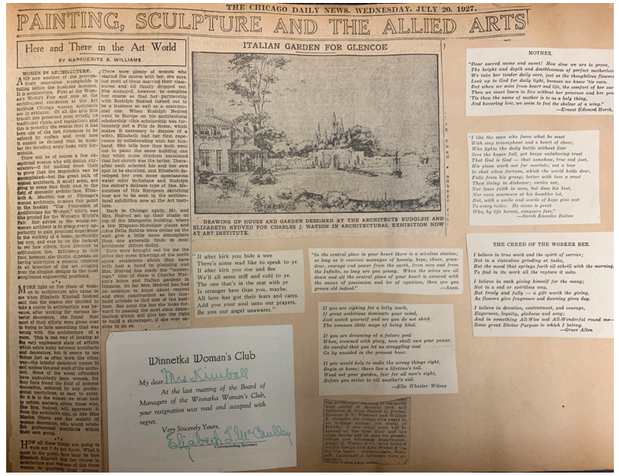
gives Mahony's renderings a flat, painterly aesthetic. Nedved's approach to drawing was more concerned with the body positioned relative to objects in space, an idea that is important to understanding how she understood architecture and later viewed the Glasner House.

Landscape Practice

The Nedveds established their own architectural practice in 1926, two years before they purchased the Glasner House, and set up their office in the Marquette Building in downtown Chicago. Their projects consisted chiefly of single-family homes in suburban settings, and these usually included landscape designs. Their design for a garden for Charles J. Watson in Glencoe was published in the Chicago Architectural Club catalog in 1927 and was also included in a *Chicago Daily News* article featuring the couples' practice, titled "Women in Architecture" (fig. 5.6-5.7). The article, which serves to highlight Elizabeth's role in the practice, clarifies that it was she who produced the renderings for their projects. In the rendering, architecture is secondary to landscape. The main house is cut off by the left frame of the image, and otherwise blocked by a tree in the midground. The only other architectural element, an Italianate pavilion, is picturesquely framed: it sits in the distance, across a small pond containing a fountain, and is framed by plantings.

The Nedveds also designed Sunset Point, a vacation estate in Eagle Point, Wisconsin, in 1928. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1993.[132] Though they did not design the landscape, only the main residence, the estate's engagement of the site is perhaps telling of the way the Nedveds approached their own landscape designs. The estate is located on a prime lakefront property, bordered by water on three sides. The property's National Register nomination form explains that the house is set into a steep hill, descending to water level (fig. 5.8). The plan of the house is rambling. The building is oriented to the topography, and projects out toward the lake in varying directions (fig. 5.9). The house, built in a historicist French Normandy style, could

132 National Register of Historic Places, Sunset Point, Eagle River, Vilas County, Wisconsin, National Register # 93001169.



THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS, WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 1927.

PAINTING, SCULPTURE AND THE ALLIED ARTS

Here and There in the Art World

BY MARGUERITE B. WILLIAMS

WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURE.

ITALIAN GARDEN FOR GLENCOE

DRAWING OF HOUSE AND GARDEN DESIGNED BY THE ARCHITECTS RUDOLPH AND ELIZABETH NEDVED FOR CHARLES J. WATSON IN ARCHITECTURAL EXHIBITION NOW AT ART INSTITUTE.

MOTHER.

THE CREED OF THE WORKER BEE.

Winnetka Woman's Club

My dear Mrs. Kimball

At the last meeting of the Board of Managers of the Winnetka Woman's Club, your resignation was read and accepted with regret.

Very Sincerely Yours,

Elizabeth L. McCully

Corresponding Secretary

Figure 5.6. Marguerite B. Williams. "Here and There in the Art World. Women in Architecture." Nedved, Rudolph J. And Elizabeth Kimball: Scrapbook, Ryerson & Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago. 00.5 Architects' and Designers' Papers, 1767-2018. Portfolio 2.

Figure 5.7. "Watson, Charles J., Garden." Elizabeth Kimball Nedved, Delineator. Archival Image & Media Collection, Ryerson & Burnham Libraries and Archives.

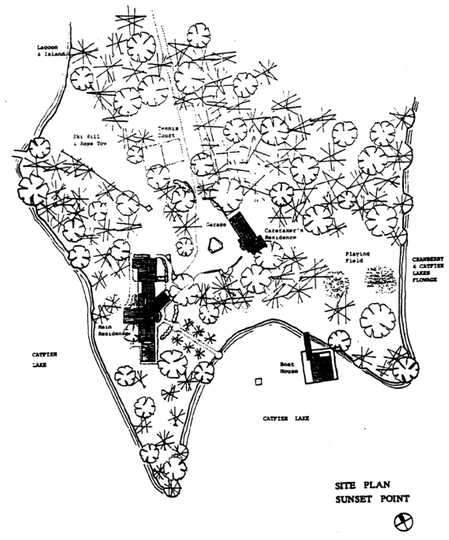


Figure 5.8. Sunset Point, Eagle Point, WI, 1928. Rudolph J. and Elizabeth Kimball Nedved. Site Plan. National Register of Historic Places, Sunset Point, Eagle River, Vilas County, Wisconsin, National Register # 93001169.

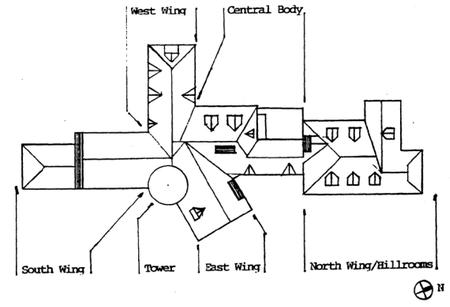


Figure 5.9. Sunset Point, Eagle Point, WI, 1928. Rudolph J. and Elizabeth Kimball Nedved. Roof Plan. National Register of Historic Places, Sunset Point, Eagle River, Vilas County, Wisconsin, National Register # 93001169.

have been inspired by the historical architecture that the Nedveds encountered on their travels in Europe.

The unification of landscape, architecture, and view also would have prepared the Nedveds for the conditions they would confront at the Glasner House. Sunset Point, built just one year before their purchase of the Glasner House, seems to echo its asymmetrical configuration and engagement of site.

Modification of the Glasner House

After moving into the Glasner House, the Nedveds began a series of modifications to make the home, according to them, more "liveable." These consisted of updates to the electrical and mechanical systems and partitioning and finishing of the basement space to include two new bedrooms and bathrooms.[133] While the Glasners had lived above the ravine, the Nedveds extended the habitable space of the house into it. While the Nedveds' interior modifications to the home were largely focused on modernizing the mechanical systems, the more visible alterations occurred on the exterior. The Nedveds remarked that when they moved into the house, there was no way to access the ravine side of the property, which dropped off steeply to the west.[134] The Nedveds thought that Wright's minimal site design approach impeded the architecture from engaging the landscape - to them, the most interesting aspect of the house. The Nedveds responded by installing a series of terraces that regulated the topography of the ravine and allowed the embankment to be inhabited (fig. 5.10). These terraces were populated with lawns, gardens, and vistas, resulting in a network of linked exterior spaces, recalling the visual and spatial continuity of Elizabeth's watercolors, which linked exterior urban spaces through the visual connection of foreground, midground, and background.

133 Leon Noe, Unpublished transcript of an interview with Rudolph and Elizabeth Nedved, 17 December 1963. Ryerson & Burnham Library: Box 2, Wrightiana Collection, 2001.3. Chicago, IL

134 Ibid.

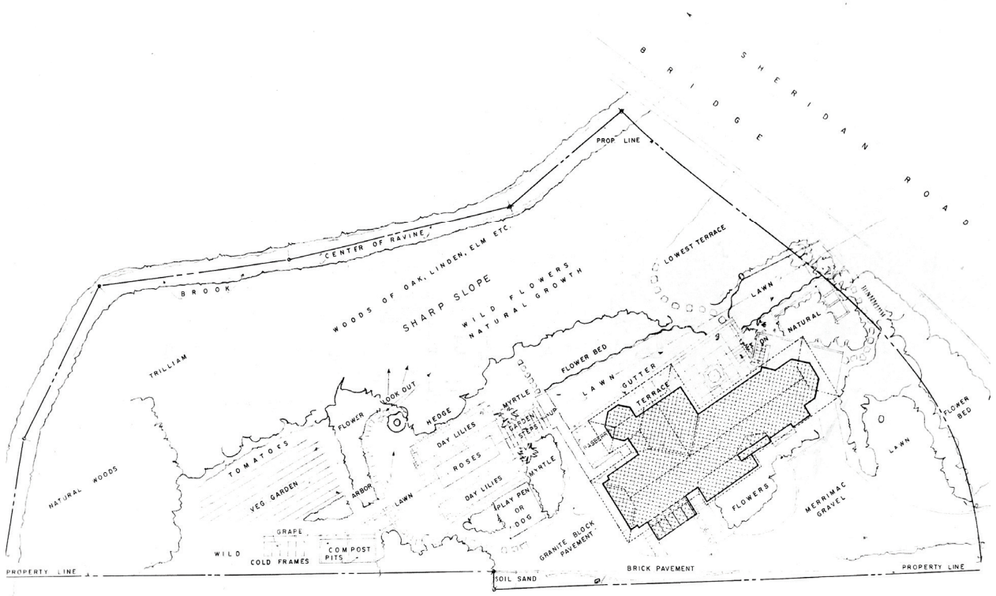


Figure 5.10. Glasner House. 1963 Site Plan, Rudolph J. and Elizabeth Kimball Nedved. Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago. 2001.3Wrightiana Collection, c.1897-2017. OP1.11

These modifications indicate that the Nedveds were interested in inhabiting the ravine rather than projecting over it: they valued the ability of the landscape to frame the architecture as much as they valued the ability of the architecture to frame the landscape.

The Picturesque

The Nedveds' changes to the property resulted in a habitable experience of the landscape. The Nedveds were interviewed by Leon Noe, a student from the University of Chicago, in 1963 - thirty-five years after they purchased the house. In the interview, Elizabeth Nedved describes the landscape as a series of outdoor rooms and spaces extending from the house. The terraces can be seen as extrusions of the topography, resulting in framed, oblique views of the architecture. Nedved implies that ultimately, the goal was to create a picturesque environment:

> …also, we're interested in spaces. You have various spaces – you have these various alleys and views on axis, and you have different levels, which are here, and which we do utilize. We created different levels so that when you walked through the gardens, you never saw the whole thing but you were kind of lead from one thing into another. One wonders what is around the turn.[135]

The ideas of varying views, denial of the whole, spatial sequence, and the resulting sense of wonder relate to the notion of the picturesque landscape developed in Britain in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and espoused by writers such as William Gilpin, Richard Payne Knight, and Uvedale Price. Pictureque theory was mainly applied to European garden and landscape design. In his 1794 treatise, Price summarizes the qualities of the picturesque, as differentiated from the related phenomena of the sublime and the beautiful:

> Again, by its variety, its intricacy, its partial concealments, it excites that active curiosity which gives play to the mind, loosening those iron bonds, with which astonishment chains up its faculties.[136]

135 Leon Noe, Unpublished transcript of an interview with Rudolph and Elizabeth Nedved, 17 December 1963. Wrightiana Collection.

136 Uvedale Price, *Essays on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; and, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape* (London : Printed for J. Mawman, 1810), http://archive.org/details/essaysonpictures01priciala, p 86.

Although ideas of the picturesque had found their way to North America in the nineteenth century, it is perhaps more likely that the Nedveds witnessed these design principles first-hand in their travels in Europe. This would have been related, but distinct from Walter Burley Griffin's adapted brand of organic picturesque naturalism. Instead, the Nedveds would have been familiar with a version of the picturesque that treated the landscape as a series of discrete images that constitute a progression through space.

The Glasner House was photographed in conjunction with the interview, capturing framed views of the architecture from the revised landscape (figs. 5.11-5.14). The house is shown from varied angles, peering from behind trees, and set within the ravine, reinforcing a picturesque understanding of the house and its relation to the landscape.

Where the Glasners were primarily concerned with the plan, the Nedveds understood the house as a series of sectional relationships:

> Frank Lloyd Wright knew how to dramatize spaces. For example, the connection there (hall between the living room and the porch) is a very low ceiling – you can touch the ceiling, while here, you can see that you have a height and so you have different shapes and different forms. These are the things that permit you to feel a kind of escape…I am with nature or I am within myself, as I wish."[137]

This translated into their modifications of the ravine, which extended the section of the house into the landscape.

The Authorship of the Nedveds

The Nedveds' authorship of the Glasner House landscape, informed by Elizabeth's approach to composition, was enabled by the fact that they resisted allowing the existing design to prescribe how they occupied the house. Elizabeth Nedved stated, when asked if Wright would have approved of her modifications: "...it doesn't matter if he (Frank Lloyd Wright) would have liked it or not."[138] The Nedveds' authorship involved experimentation and iteration. They

137 Leon Noe, Unpublished transcript of an interview with Rudolph and Elizabeth Nedved, 17 December 1963. Wrightiana Collection

138 Ibid.

respected Wright's design as far is it provided a canvas, or as Marion Mahony would call it, a "body," onto which they could enact their own vision of the architecture. The Nedveds reveal a side of authorship that engages a sense of ownership of the architecture. In total, they inhabited the house for more than forty years – longer than any other owner – and the house and landscape evolved with them.

Jack Reed, the house's current owner, plans to reverse the changes made by the Nedveds and restore the landscape to its original grade. According to him, the Nedveds, "didn't get it,"[139] implying that they failed to see the house's organic relationship with the ravine and the poetry of the "treehouse" experience. Despite contradicting Wright's original design, the Nedveds' authorships are still interesting to consider because they make the site respond to the building. Their modifications recall the function of the reader, according to Barthes, as the determiner of meaning. By re-envisioning the ravine itself as a series of habitable exterior rooms, they proposed a completely different relationship of the house to the site. Their modifications worked to both restructure the landscape and reposition the house within it.

139 On-site conversation between Jack Reed and author, March 11, 2020.

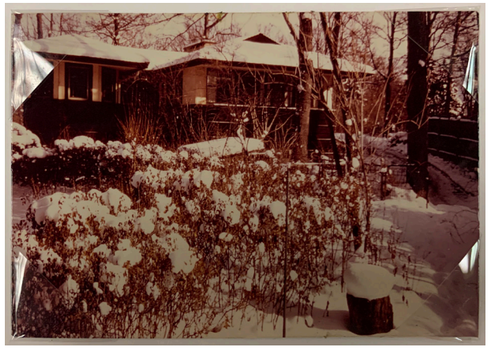


Figure 5.11. Glasner House. Photographs from transcript of interview with Rudolph and Elizabeth Kimball Nedved. Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago. 2001.3 Wrightiana Collection. Box 2.

Figure 5.12. Glasner House. Photographs from transcript of interview with Rudolph and Elizabeth Kimball Nedved. Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago. 2001.3 Wrightiana Collection. Box 2.

Figure 5.13. Glasner House. Photographs from transcript of interview with Rudolph and Elizabeth Kimball Nedved. Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago. 2001.3 Wrightiana Collection. Box 2.

Figure 5.14. Glasner House. Photographs from transcript of interview with Rudolph and Elizabeth Kimball Nedved. Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago. 2001.3 Wrightiana Collection. Box 2.

Figure 5.15. Glasner House. Photographs from transcript of interview with Rudolph and Elizabeth Kimball Nedved. Ryerson and Burnham Libraries and Archives, Chicago. 2001.3 Wrightiana Collection. Box 2.

Epilogue

On an overcast morning in early March, I boarded a commuter train headed for downtown Glencoe to meet Jack Reed, the current owner of the Glasner House. I arrived just before noon and met Reed at a local deli west of the train station. We drove to Maple Hill Road, just north of the Glasner House, and parked. We walked the remaining distance on foot in order to experience, according to Reed, the best approach to the house. The route led us south on Sheridan Road and across the ravine. From the ravine bridge, I caught a first glimpse of the house peering through the leafless trees. Reed stopped to explain his plans to return the ravine to its original grade and eliminate the Nedveds' "table land" before leading me across the bridge to the house's driveway entrance. As we approached, Reed lovingly described the nuances of the materials – how the stucco changed color depending on the season, darkening with the humidity – the types of details that are best observed in person.

I was led down the driveway entrance, around the library, and up to the front door. Reed paused and prepared me for the "big event" – arrival into the living room. Upon entering, the space opened up before us, anchored by the massive hearth and sheltered by the canopy of the branch-like ceiling. We ate lunch at a folding table in the corner of the living room – according to Reed, the location where Wright intended meals to be eaten. Reed proceeded to lead me through the house, generously showing me the meticulous restorative work that he had spent years undertaking: rotating the wood flooring back to its original orientation to emphasize the main axis of the house; reinforcing the walls to eliminate the structural tie-rods introduced by the previous owners; re-painting the walls to match the original color scheme – all decisions that Reed believed faithfully restored the architecture to Wright's original intent.

However, the highlight of the tour was experiencing the nuanced details that, like the subtlety of the exterior materials, are best understood in person, such as the quality of light that changes with the seasons thanks to the mediation of the stained-glass windows, (on the day of my visit, with no leaves yet on the trees, they cast a warm yellow hue). While this may have been the first time that I physically occupied the space of the house, this was not the first time I had inhabited it. I had become acquainted with the relationship of the house to the landscape, the meandering entry sequence, and relationship of interior spaces by studying drawings. My physical experience of the house followed and confirmed these understandings, and also revealed poetic details of the house that I had not anticipated. Despite having become very familiar with the house and site in plan, there were experiences which were only really possible in person, such as the tension in having the view of the ravine concealed, only to be projected out over the ravine upon entering the house.

These two different ways of understanding architecture – first, by abstractly projecting into the space through the reading of drawings; and second, by reading the architecture through the physical inhabitation of the house, also reflect the authorships of the Glasner House. Throughout the thesis, I have considered how different readerships and authorships were constructed by multiple people through both drawing and lived experience. In writing this thesis, my own authorship has now been added.

Authorship in architecture does not belong to just one, but many authors, and is established in multiple ways – from drawing to building, design to inhabitation, alteration to restoration. Through these different means, different authors both edit and create additional layers of meaning. Consequently, the multiple authors of the Glasner House: Frank Lloyd Wright, Cora and William Glasner, Marion Mahony, and Elizabeth Kimball Nedved and Rudolph Nedved, had agency in their engagement of the house.

The relevance of the authorships of Wright, the Glasners, Mahony, the Nedveds, and now Reed is not only in the visible impacts that they had on the architecture, but also in the ways in which each author constructed their own authorship by building, drawing, inhabiting, and renovating the house. These authors also acted as readers by interpreting and responding to the building's program, image, and site. Through

their interventions, which took the forms of building, use, drawing, and physical manipulation of the site, the Glasner House's authors asserted specific positions regarding contemporary notions of domesticity, the representation of architecture, or how architecture relates to landscape. These positions were based on the authors' past experiences, personal convictions, and particular ways of seeing, all of which are fundamental to readership and directly inform authorship.

Jack Reed's continuing work on the house affirms this notion of authorship. He now asserts his position on the lived experience of the house, including its relationship to the site and interior spatial relationships, by reinstating many of Wright's original propositions. Once the restoration work is complete, Reed intends to sell the house to a new owner, thereby extending its life as a dwelling. Thus, the dialogue surrounding the Glasner House will continue to evolve as new readerships and authorships, such as Reed's, my own, and those of future inhabitants, are constructed and added to its history.

The authors of the Glasner House recall the reader of both Barthes and Steiner, who is cast as a creative agent. According to Barthes, the reader, as the site of interpretation, controls the meaning of a text. In the act of writing, the author detaches their own identity from the text and transfers agency to the reader, much like an architect does in realizing a building design. While Glasner, Mahony, and Nedved read and responded to the architecture of the Glasner House, these readings were not based on Wright's intentions. Rather, they stemmed from Glasner's own notions of domesticity, Mahony's interpretation of atmosphere, and Nedved's picturesque approach to landscape.

Similarly, Steiner conceived of reading as a re-creative act, in which the reader responds to the writer by constructing an "answering text." Through a similar process, Glasner, Mahony, and Nedved constructed "answering architectures" by actualizing their readings of the house. Glasner's flexible and innovative use of space answered the dynamic spatial relationships posited by Wright. Mahony's re-drawing of the house answered and augmented Wright's stipulations of view and composition. Finally, Nedved's terracing of the landscape and framing of the house in nature challenged Wright's ideas of how the house should engage the site.

Readership and authorship in architecture are fundamentally linked, with multiple characters - designers, clients, drafters, owners - having the capacity to act as both readers and authors. The terms "author" and "reader" perhaps imply a linear, one-directional relationship, where the author creates, and the reader responds. However, the authors of the Glasner House show that this relationship is more complex: readership can also produce authorship, through a process of critical interpretation that leads to a sense of agency and ownership. Not only does this dynamic allow multiple agents to oscillate between readership and authorship, it also encompasses many forms of engagement, including building, drawing, and lived experience.

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