

# Historic Furnishings Report For Selected Spaces of the Darwin D. Martin House Buffalo, NY

## Volume II of II: Furnishings Report

Martin House Restoration Corporation  
Buffalo, NY



Darwin D. Martin House living room, Henry Fuermann & Sons, 1907.

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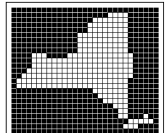
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## I. INTRODUCTION to VOLUME II

### **Need for Historic Furnishings Report**

Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House complex— five interconnected buildings and their extensive complement of furnishings, fixtures and art glass— was designed and executed as a *gesamtkunstwerk*— a total, integrated work of art. In this sense, with the major reconstructions of Phase III complete, reuniting all of the buildings of this composition, it is logical to undertake a parallel effort that documents and starts to interpret related collections in their original context. Indeed, given the many built-in and custom designed furnishings created for the Martin House, many spaces demonstrate the difficulty in delineating structural design from décor. Essentially, a furnishings report for the Martin House is an extension of a historic structures report and other fundamental architectural planning documents.

This report is being prepared in advance of the interior restoration of the Martin House (phase V of restoration, slated to begin in 2009) and implementation of any interpretive programming involving furnishings. The reason for this is to give sufficient time for the necessary preparation and conservation of collections and for the pursuit of further collections-based research that may inform the overall interpretive program for the Martin House complex.

Early in the planning of this document, it was determined that the scope would include only the major spaces in the Martin House on the public tour route. But this report is also intended to serve as a model for future volumes— Furnishing Plans for additional second floor spaces of the Martin House, and spaces in the Barton House, carriage house and gardener's cottage.

### **Organization**

The Martin House Historic Furnishings Report has been organized into two volumes: a Research Report (Volume I) and a Furnishings Report (Volume II).

The Research Report is designed as a comprehensive catalog of resources and collections pertaining to the historic interiors and furnishings of the Martin House. The individual catalogs therein— object collections, photographs, letters, drawings, et cetera— are organized and annotated such that they may serve as compendia for further research and interpretation to be presented in Volume II.

Volume II, the Furnishings Report defines critical issues for the conservation, interpretation and exhibition of Martin House related collections within the selected public spaces of the Martin House and offer analysis and recommendations on these

issues. The Furnishings Report includes both narrative recommendations and floor plans for the interpretive appointments of each space under consideration.

### **Methodology and Organization—Volume I (Research Report)**

The organization of this Historic Furnishings Report into the two distinct volumes was guided, in part, by the abundance of documentation and resources available for study of the Martin House complex and its furnishings, and the familiarity of MHRC staff (chiefly the Martin House Curators) with these resources. The Martin House Curators had already conducted extensive research utilizing the Wright / Martin collection in the University Archives, University at Buffalo, the collections in the care of the New York State Bureau of Historic Sites at the Peebles Island Resource Center, and the various repositories of Fuermann and Sons' 1907 photographs of the Martin House. It seemed reasonable to bring this existing familiarity to bear on the research stage of a Historic Furnishings Report.

The MHRC determined the relevant spaces for the scope of this report to be: entry hall, reception room, bursar's office, kitchen, unit room (dining room, living room, library), and master bedroom. I then proceeded—with guidance from strategic partners—to collect, catalog and annotate all known resources pertaining to the interior appointments and furnishings of the Martin House. The historical parameters for the sake of cataloguing resources was broadly and preliminarily defined as 1903–1925. This definition was largely dictated by the inherent chronology of the major resources available, with the understanding that not all resources within this range would be ultimately relevant.

### **Methodology and Organization—Volume II (Furnishings Report)**

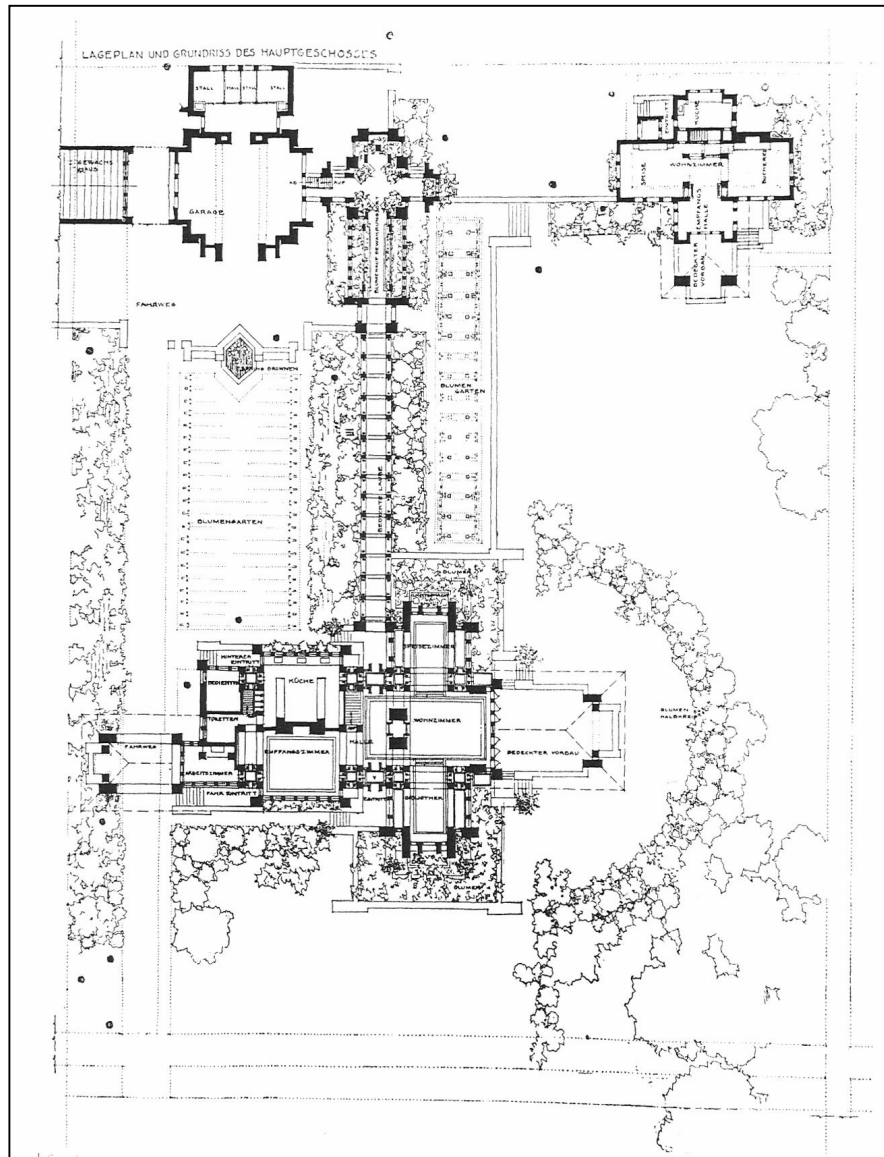
With volume I as its primary resource, volume II seeks to weigh and interpret the vast array of evidence compiled in the first volume, and to communicate it in a way that will serve as an instrumental guide to effectively and accurately furnishing the main, public spaces to be interpreted in the Martin House. No one source of information—drawings, photographs or letters—provided all the necessary evidence to complete this guide. Some spaces are more clearly documented than others. A degree of speculative interpretation was necessary in order to formulate a plausible furnishings plan for some rooms.

Volume II is organized according to a traditional model for Historic Furnishings Reports: Administrative Information (Section II) to provide an institutional context for the report, Historical Information (Section IV) to provide a historical context and narrative that interprets the available evidence, and a room-by-room Furnishings Plan that offers inventories and floor plans to guide the subsequent furnishing of the spaces in question. One less traditional addition to this structure is an interpretive

essay (Section III) that offers a scholarly analysis of the Martin House "unit" room and its furnishings *vis a vis* that of Wright's prototypical "Home in a Prairie Town."



## II. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION



*Wright's master plan for the Martin House complex, Wasmuth portfolio, 1910*

## **A. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MARTIN HOUSE COMPLEX**

### **The Martin Period (1902—1937)**

In 1879, the Larkin Soap Company was a small, Buffalo-based soap purveyor when the fourteen-year-old Darwin D. Martin began working for the firm as a door-to-door salesman. A year later he was the company's bookkeeper, and by 1907, Martin was a millionaire executive working for what had become one of the largest mail-order housewares operations in the nation.

The meteoric growth of the Larkin Company provided the conditions for two of Frank Lloyd Wright's most renowned works: the Larkin Administration Building and the Martin House complex. By 1902, Martin had the material resources to pursue his vision of constructing a family compound in Buffalo, and the Larkin Company had the need for a new administrative facility. When Martin traveled to Chicago to meet Frank Lloyd Wright—who had been enthusiastically recommended to Darwin by his Chicago-based brother, William and by Larkin Company executive William Heath—he had not one but potentially two major commissions to offer: a house for himself and an office building for the company.

At that time the 35-year-old Frank Lloyd Wright had designed approximately 120 buildings, concentrated almost exclusively in Chicago and southern Wisconsin. His reputation was growing, but only regionally. The Buffalo commissions represented a valuable opportunity for Wright to expand his range both geographically and programmatically. In retrospect, they allowed him to fulfill his ambition to become a national figure rather than a regional curiosity.

Wright traveled to Buffalo in November, 1902, where he and Martin agreed to proceed with what was framed as a test project to assess Wright's ability to tackle the two larger jobs. Work began in October, 1903 on the modestly scaled George Barton House, a residence for Darwin's sister and brother-in-law and the first of a series of six structures that would comprise the Martin House complex. The entire complex and the celebrated Larkin Company Administration Building both would be complete within three years.

Martin purchased the site for the Martin house at Wright's insistence in 1902. Bounded on the south by Jewett Parkway and on the east by Summit Avenue, the 1.5 acre corner parcel is defined by the non-orthogonal streetscape of Frederick Law Olmsted's 1868 picturesque Parkside District, a recreational and residential area that contrasts noticeably with the surrounding late-nineteenth-century grid. With little regard for (or inspiration from) Olmsted's curvilinear street pattern, Wright effectively regularized the parcel with an orthogonal geometry for the entire Martin complex.



In May 1903, even before the Barton House the oldest case was finished, Wright was already preparing a scheme for the larger complex. By late fall, 1903, he had drafted preliminary plans for the almost fifteen thousand square feet, two-storey Martin House, a hundred-foot long pergola, a glass-topped conservatory, and carriage house (encompassing a garage, stables and paddock) with chauffeur's apartment. Ground was broken for the main house on June 20, 1904, and seventeen months later Isabelle and Darwin Martin moved into their residence at 125 Jewett Parkway. A Wright-designed gardener's cottage was built in 1909 as a final addition to the complex.

### **“Period of Abandonment” (1937—1954)**

The Martins resided in the house as a family until Darwin's death in 1935. The stock market crash of 1929 had eliminated much of the Martin fortune. Isabelle Martin was unable to afford the property taxes on the Martin estate, and in 1937 she abandoned the house. The family sold the Barton House and the gardener's cottage shortly thereafter. The City of Buffalo became the *de facto* owner of the estate when it was sold through a real property tax foreclosure in 1946. Thereafter, the property suffered extensive damage from the elements, vandalism and general neglect.

It was during this period that many elements of Wright's *tout ensemble* of furnishings and fixtures were lost from the house. Most were removed by the Martins' son, Darwin R. Martin, to be used in his other Buffalo properties, sold or given away. Other elements—particularly built-in fixtures and art glass—may well have been stolen and vandalized during this period. Ultimately, over half of the original art glass was lost from the complex. Much of it made its way to dealers (such as Feigen in New York) and thence to public and private collections around the globe—from the Maltwood Art Museum and Gallery in Victoria, BC to the Musée d'Orsay in Paris to the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

### **Tauriello Period (1954—1966)**

A Buffalo architect, Sebastian Tauriello, purchased the Martin property in 1954. He proceeded to renovate the main house, dividing it into four units: quarters for himself and his family, two rental units, and office space for his architectural practice (in the basement). The pergola, conservatory, and carriage house, however, were too greatly deteriorated for Tauriello to renovate or restore, and in 1960 he sold this parcel of the estate off to a developer who demolished the structures to build a three-building apartment complex. This radical alteration of Wright's vision for the Martin House complex presented a shocking parallel to the fate of the Larkin Company Administration Building (which had been demolished in 1950 to make way for surface parking).

### **University at Buffalo Period (1966—1992)**

Following the death of Sebastian Tauriello in 1965, his wife, Ruth, sold the property to the State University of New York (University at Buffalo). The University renovated the Martin house for use as the official residence of then University President Martin Meyerson. To this end, a partial restoration was undertaken under the guidance of Wright apprentice Edgar Tafel. During the 1970s, the house was used as the University Archives, University at Buffalo Foundation, University Alumni Association and, briefly, the Canadian American Center.

In 1982, stewardship of the Martin House was assigned to the University's School of Architecture and Environmental Design. The first Martin House curator, John O'Hern, was appointed in 1983. O'Hern resided in the house until 1989, continuing public tours (which had begun in 1980), documenting the Martin House design, construction and history to that point, and laying the foundation for the current docent tour text. His work culminated in a Historical Report and Analysis of Original Conditions (Volume I, Appendix C).

### **MHRC Period (1992—Present)**

With the formation of the not-for-profit Martin House Restoration Corporation (MHRC) in 1992, a dedicated and comprehensive effort to restore the Martin House complex was born. The MHRC joined with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP), Bureau of Historic Sites in a cooperative agreement for restoration and future administration of the Martin House complex (as a State Historic Site). The Corporation also works in concert with various strategic partners, including the University at Buffalo, to accomplish its mission. Although its original mandate was to restore only the Martin House, the MHRC progressively acquired all the original, and several contiguous properties to allow a restoration/reconstruction of the entire complex, including rebuilding the pergola, conservatory and carriage house, restoring the historic landscaping, and reassembling the original interior appointments. Subsequently, the community, government, many local foundations, and corporate leaders rallied around the ambitious goal of restoring the entire site. Each phase of this restoration has been conducted under the guidance of Hamilton Houston Lownie Architects, LLC, the restoration architects for the project.

## **B. MHRC MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission statement of the Martin House Restoration Corporation is:

*To raise the funds and oversee the restoration of Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House complex, returning it to its condition of 1907.*

*To open it to the world as a historic house museum.*

*To interpret it well*

*To market it effectively*

*To operate it efficiently*

While this mission statement does not provide specific direction as to how to interpret [the Martin House complex] well, it does imply that use of the complex as a house museum and effective interpretation in that context is central to the mission of the organization. Ongoing, strategic museum planning will be instrumental to the fulfillment of this mission.

Long-range museum planning will come to bear also on the use of collections, special exhibitions, and application of interpretive tours as the restoration of the complex is completed and interiors are furnished using this Furnishings Report as a guide.

### C. RATIONALE FOR YEAR OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historic restoration of buildings with a complex history that includes recent renovations or adaptive reuse (as the Martin House does) require that a Year or Period of Significance be designated from the outset—the prime period of the property's history, to which it will be restored and interpreted for the public.

The Period of Significance for the restoration of the structures of the Martin House complex has been determined to be 1907. This determination was made largely through the Darwin D. Martin House Scholars' Conference of 1994. Other Periods of Significance—1990 and 1935—were considered, but the MHRC and NYSOPRHP determined 1907 to be most appropriate, as detailed in the Master Plan / Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

The year 1907 is significant in that the five original structures of the complex were complete and the Martins were in residence, but no subsequent alterations to the structures or interiors had been made. Beginning in 1909, the Martins altered art glass, moved walls, and altered furnishings to adapt Wright's ideal design vision to suit their lifestyle, needs and tastes.

The emphasis in this choice of a Period of Significance is on the architectural merit of the complex as designed, rather than the social history of its use by the Martins. However, the choice is not intended to preclude any consideration of social history in interpreting the spaces of the Martin House. As the Master Plan / FEIS states:

*The overpowering significance of the Martin House Complex as originally conceived is that it is a masterpiece of architecture designed and built under the supervision of America's greatest architect. The social history of the property during its occupancy by the Martin family would not have to be overlooked but could be communicated through the interpretive programs which will be presented in the Visitor Center at the site.*

The chosen Period of Significance, however, poses some challenges to a comprehensively didactic furnishings plan for the public spaces of the Martin House: if we adhere strictly to 1907, important furnishings—some illustrative of the character of members of the Martin family and of the give-and-take between architect and client—must be treated as secondary, outlying objects that cannot appropriately be interpreted in a space representing 1907. The tall case clock and encyclopedia stand that Wright designed in 1912 represent examples of this challenge. They beg the question of whether the Period of Significance for furnishings in the Martin House should be broadened to 1912.

Conflicting evidence from Martin House furniture documentation, especially concerning the library (see sections III and IV), argues that widening the scope of

the Period of Significance for furnishings may be a way to reconcile such discrepancies and formulate a credible plan.

## **D. INTERPRETIVE OBJECTIVES / PLAN**

### **Interpretive Objectives**

The MHRC and its consultants have identified the following objectives for interpretive planning:

#### Overarching Objectives:

- To give visitors a physical, emotional and intellectual experience of Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural principles, ideals and artistic genius.
- To tell visitors a compelling story about Darwin D. Martin's patronage, courage and risk-taking in commissioning Wright to design the complex.
- To demonstrate how Wright designed the Martin House complex as a portrait of his client, and how the family's life intersects with his design.

#### Martin House Visitor Center and Tour Objectives:

- To provide visitors with a compelling introduction to the tour through an orientation film and other interpretive elements.
- To provide visitors with a context in which to understand the significance of Wright's work on the Martin House and his architectural principles as a whole.
- To demonstrate / illustrate Wright's main architectural principles. (see section IV B).
- To illustrate the importance of the Martin House complex in Wright's *oeuvre*.
- To present Darwin Martin as an enlightened patron, and the Martin House complex as a reflection of his progressive character.
- To introduce other local sites of architectural significance and present Western New York as an "architectural museum."

## **E. RESTORATION OVERVIEW AND VISITOR CENTER PLANNING**

### **Restoration Overview**

#### **Phase I**

Restoration of the Martin and Barton house roofs and gutters was undertaken in 1996-1997 in order to protect the structures and prevent further water damage. Extensive shoring and sistering of new lumber with the original timber structure was accomplished. Replica clay roof tiles were installed along with reinstatement of the original tray within a copper gutter system.

#### **Phase II**

Phase II (2003-2004) consisted of: Martin House foundation waterproofing; installation of new water service and sewer systems; replacement of the Martin House veranda concrete slab; and installation of a non-historic basement mechanical room beneath the veranda slab. Initial steps were also accomplished to relocate utilities service underground.

#### **Phase III**

The most ambitious and pivotal of the first three phases of restoration process, Phase III focused on the complete reconstruction on the original footprint and based on the original drawings and specifications of the Wright-designed pergola, conservatory and carriage house. The work occurred over a three year period from 2004 through 2006. This phase also included installation of mechanical systems such as the geothermal HVAC system, final relocation of site utilities (underground), and preliminary tie-in of mechanical systems to the Martin House.

#### **Phase IV**

Phase IV (2007-2008) included restoration of all exterior concrete and masonry elements, including re-pointing of nearly 85% of the exterior brick work, as well as the reinstallation and restoration of garden walls and floral urns. In keeping with the restoration date of significance identified as 1907, prior changes to exterior walls made by the Martins were reversed, including the second floor south elevation wall being moved back to its original location, and the removal of a trunk room added by filling-in a cantilevered corner on the northwest of the house. An ADA lift allowing access to the first floor of the Martin House was installed behind the cheek wall leading to the entrance.

It should be noted that restoration of the Martin House proper in Phases IV and V will include making the entire ground floor of the house compliant with ADA guidelines and accessible to the fullest extent possible. *This factor should be considered in the implementation of this furnishings plan.*

## **Phase V**

Phase V construction documents are nearly complete and will detail the final phase of restoration on the historic site. The MHRC desires to bid the Phase V work in the first quarter of 2009 and conclude the upgrading/replacement of all mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems, including fire monitoring, fire suppression and campus-wide IT systems. Reversal of non-historic changes to the floor plan will be included in this phase. Extensive interior cabinetry to be re-instated includes the built-in elements in the dining room, pier clusters, bursar's office and kitchen. The "all-embracing" quarter-sawn white oak wood trim throughout the house will be restored and re-instated as necessary. Interior plaster and intricate paint finishes will also be restored to Wright's sophisticated and complex design. Alternative video interpretations of the second floor of the Martin House will be installed in discreet first floor locations for persons unable to access the upper floor. Pre-development phase estimates for the time necessary to complete all work is in the 18 – 24 month range.

## **Art Glass and Landscape Restoration**

On independent tracks, work is also underway to reinstate the historic landscape of the site and to restore and replicate the nearly 400 art glass windows of the complex. No definitive time has yet been established to complete either of these restoration efforts.

## **The Martin House Visitor Center**

As part of the Environmental Impact Study, the MHRC determined the need for a new Visitor Center to handle the anticipated influx of visitors responsibly. Marketing consultants projected 60,000 to 100,000 visitors to the Martin House complex annually, based upon studies of comparable sites and potential for the growth of cultural tourism in Buffalo / Niagara.

The MHRC determined the basic functional program for the building as: ticketing, public restrooms, museum shop, and exhibition space. The building was to be located on a contiguous parcel on the western boundary of the historic site. The size of the building's plan was limited, and its elevation restricted.

In June 2002, the Visitor Center Planning Committee of the MHRC launched an architectural competition to find an outstanding architect to design the new Visitor



Center. The committee selected Toshiko Mori Architect as the winner of the competition and contracted their services in October 2002. Since that time, further revisions to the design competition submission have been made resulting in a smaller, more efficient building; the museum shop has been relocated to the carriage house, and educational class room space has been relocated to the billiard / playroom of the Martin House.

Construction of the Greatbatch Pavilion, as the building will be known, is underway and is scheduled for substantial completion by the end of 2008.

## F. OPERATING PLAN

During the years of its stewardship, the University at Buffalo began to offer tours and programs at the Martin House, with the first tour script established in 1976. The MHRC has offered a regular schedule of tours since its inception in 1992, and has increased the frequency and variety of these continuously over the years. Public tours and related revenue from the Wisteria Shop (the Martin House museum shop) are central to the earned revenue of the MHRC.

Standard public tours (one hour) currently (2008) include the Martin House, pergola, conservatory and carriage house. In-Depth tours (two hours) add the Barton House and gardener's cottage to the route. A once-monthly "Focus" tour covers all of the spaces seen on the In-Depth tour, but offers the most detailed narrative of any of the tours. Special tours, in season, also include "Behind the Scenes" tours and evening "Twilight" tours.

The MHRC has revised the tour text provided for docent training several times since its inception in 1976 as new information has come to light through the restoration process and refinement of the docent training process. The current text (Appendix A to this report) is a reflection of curatorial objectives, visitor feedback and directives produced through a series of content development exercises with museum planning consultants. The Martin House Curator, MHRC staff and Senior Docents will continue the refinement of this text through annual review.

As marketing of the site increases, so too will the number of tours and the variety of specialty tour offerings. With the pergola, conservatory and carriage house complete (2007), the tour sequence was extended and the time in the Martin House interior shortened to allow visitors time to see the entire complex.

With the major reconstruction of these missing elements complete, the MHRC will implement the next phase of restoration to return the Martin House interiors to their ideal condition of 1907. Re-assembly of pier cluster elements, the fireplace mosaic, art glass and paint treatments in the unit room will add vital dimensions to visitors' understanding of Wright's highly integrated design for the Martin House.

Looking forward, the MHRC will continue to develop and offer other specialty tours (i.e., tours focused on furnishings, art glass and gardens). The eventual opening of the Visitor Center, with its orientation film, will take some of the burden of visitor orientation off the docent, allowing them to focus on discussion of the innovative architecture of the complex.

An active Education committee is working on various public programming initiatives to add to the MHRC operational menu— including curriculum-aligned school tours and a summer camp implemented in 2008.

## G. PRIOR PLANNING DOCUMENTS

*The following documents pertain to the restoration, use, management, operation and public interpretation of the Martin House complex; all are available in the office library of the MHRC:*

Frank Lloyd Wright's Darwin D. Martin House Historical Report and Analysis of Original Conditions

John D. O'Hern, Curator, Darwin D. Martin House, August, 1988.

Darwin D. Martin House State Historic Site: Master Plan / Final Environmental Impact Statement

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation / Hamilton Houston Lownie Architects, PC and Martin House Restoration Corporation, June 29, 2001.

An Historic Structure Report: Condition Survey and Preliminary Restoration Plan

Hasbrouck Peterson Associates, December, 1990.

Art Glass Inventory's Condition Survey and Preliminary Restoration Plan

Hasbrouck Peterson Associates, July, 1990.

Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House Complex Study Guide (Docent Tour Text)

Martin House Restoration Corporation, 2005 (see appendix).

Darwin D. Martin House Scholars' Conference Transcription

School of Architecture and Planning, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1994 (conference held 1993).

Henry Fuermann and Sons Photographs of Frank Lloyd Wright's Darwin D. Martin House, Buffalo, New York, 1903-1906.

A Catalogue compiled by Jack Quinan, July 2004.

Furnishings Inventory's Condition Survey and Preliminary Restoration Plan

Hasbrouck Peterson Associates, July, 1990.

Architectural Program's Martin House Complex

Christopher Chadbourne and Associates, June, 2002.

Exhibit Master Plan's Martin House Complex

Christopher Chadbourne and Associates, March, 2003.



### III. ESSAY:

#### The Martin House Unit Room—Furnishing Plan and Precedents by Eric Jackson-Forsberg



*The Martin House entry hall. Photograph by Fuermann and Sons, 1907*

In all the copious correspondence concerning the design and construction of the Martin House complex—hundreds of letters between Frank Lloyd Wright, Darwin Martin, and other players in the commission—there is very little evidence of Darwin and Isabelle Martin’s aesthetic understanding or appreciation of their own home. Martin’s approval of the house’s interior amounts to one line in this correspondence: “The living room looked very pleasant with the sun shining in this morning, and we believe the house will contain more than ample room for our little family.”<sup>1</sup> If these letters are any indication, Wright may have done little explicitly to educate his important new Buffalo clients on either the form or function of his revolutionary design (although some face-to-face and telephone exchanges may have compensated for this lack of didactic writing).

When Darwin Martin and his brother William visited Wright’s Oak Park Studio for the first time in 1902, it is likely that Walter Burley Griffin, Wright’s studio manager and proxy that day, presented Martin with the Prairie house prototype of “A Home in a Prairie Town” from *Ladies Home Journal* (February, 1901). The “Home in a Prairie Town” floor plan reproduced in Martin’s personal copy of the 1902 Chicago Architectural Club catalogue has an overdrawing—possibly by Wright—that suggests extending the “unit room” space to resemble that of the Martin House.<sup>2</sup> Thus modified, this plan shows the evolution of Wright’s unit room concept, apparently for Martin’s benefit. Martin may have accepted this elaborated “Home in a Prairie Town” plan as the prototype for his new house, but did he accept its fundamental spatial differences from the typical domestic structures of the day? For that matter, could he

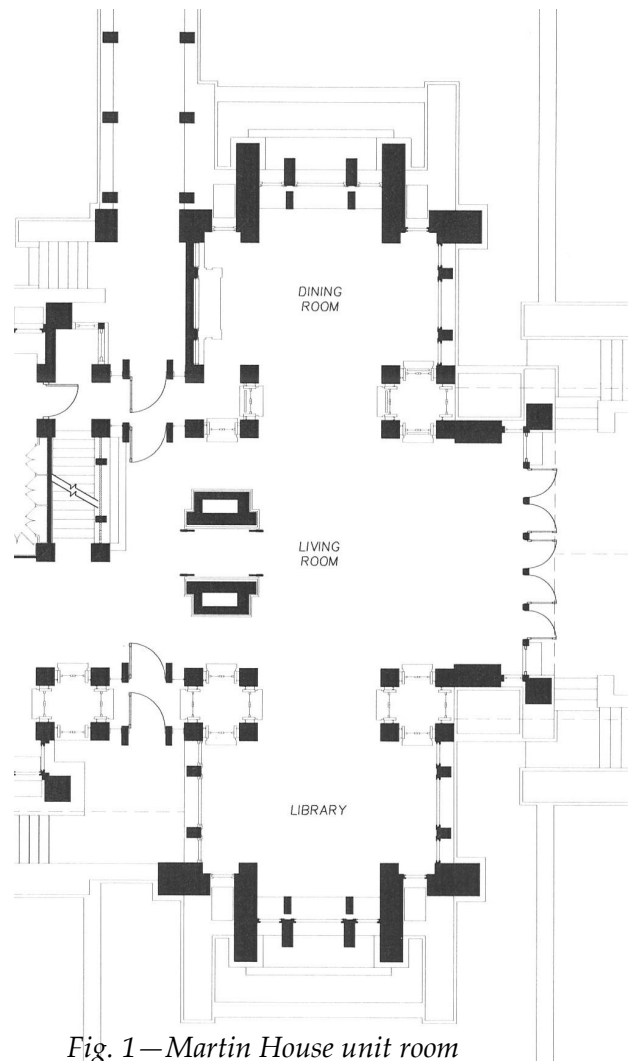
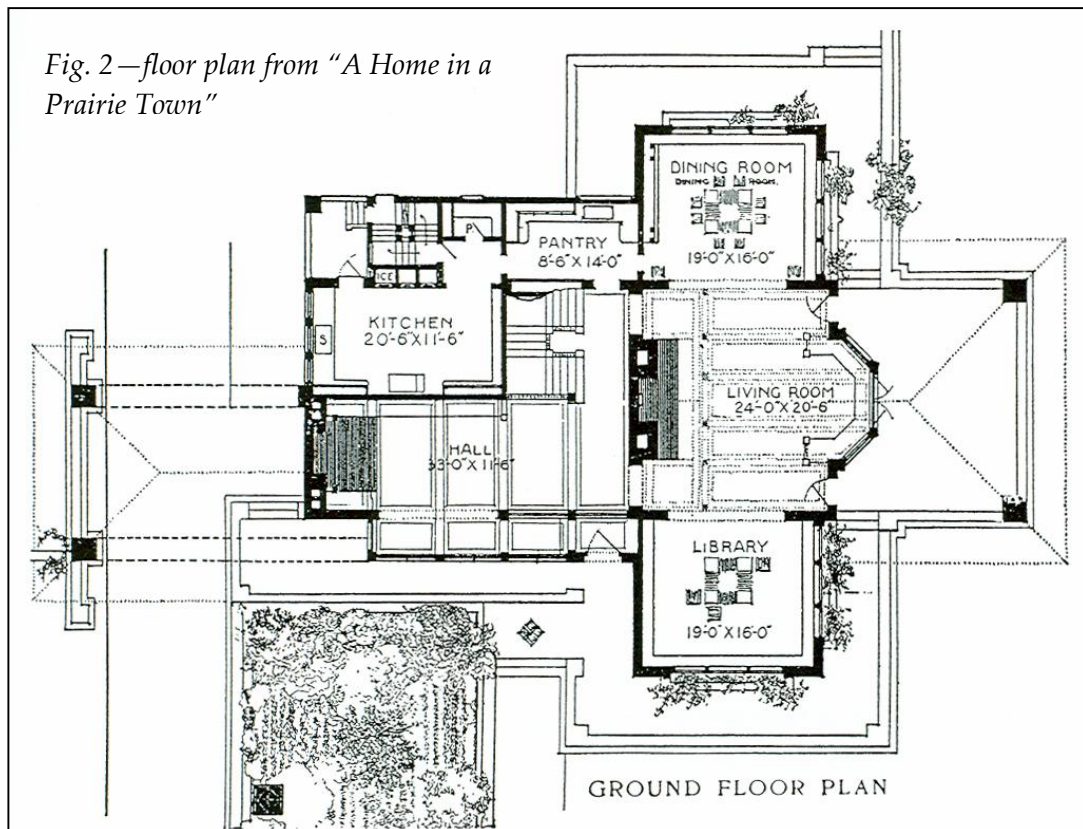


Fig. 1—Martin House unit room

possibly foresee how far Wright would develop the skeletal construction and openness from the prototype to the resulting Martin house? To address these questions is to explore the meanings and functions of Wright's vision for the Martin House interiors and furnishings—and to assess the Martins' expectations regarding the mutability of this vision.

The Martins made incessant requests, beginning in 1903, for entirely practical space and storage considerations, suggesting that Wright did not explicate the *conceptual* reasons for his design of the Martin House to his clients. Either Wright did not elucidate, or the Martins did not understand, that the highly axial, open plan for the house which combined spaces within a common envelope would “break the box” of conventional interiors. For example, in response to Wright's assertion of an expanded reception hall—what would become the Martins' “Reception room”—Martin flatly states, “[o]mit the large useless hall,<sup>3</sup>” apparently oblivious to the effect that such an omission would have on Wright's interdependent, interwoven cruciform plan. Concerning the radically open, “unit room” space (*fig. 1*) of the first floor north-south axis, Martin responds: “the living room is growing smaller...library will become the living room...<sup>4</sup>” The Martins' practical concerns voiced here were tied to late Victorian conventions of interior design and furnishing. Wright, again, does not respond with detailed, conceptual remediation that might have mitigated these practical concerns; rather, he says succinctly: “Whole 1<sup>st</sup> floor is living room with



subdivisions.<sup>5</sup> Though characteristically terse, Wright's explanation of the main living space of the Martin House is telling in regard to his ultimate goal of skeletal openness. Excluding the kitchen and service areas, Wright intends for the entire first floor to be considered – and used – as continuous “living” space, with subdivisions provided not by conventional walls, but by a continuous, human-scaled network of piers, frieze rails and varying overhead conditions within a common envelope of space. He also supplements this system of spatial subdivision by the design and placement of furnishings, both built-in and moveable. However, Wright's intentions for the spaces in the Martin House and the Martins' comfort level with the interior design tend to present conflicting visions of how the spaces were meant to be furnished.

### **The Martin House Furnishing Plan and “A Home in a Prairie Town”**

In his recent study of the Martin House, Martin House Senior Curator Jack Quinan observes that “...the Martin House is an enlarged and elaborated version of Wright's ‘Home in a Prairie Town’ (fig. 2).<sup>6</sup> The comparison applies not only to the general plan of the house, but to its custom designed furnishings and furnishing plan as well. Comparing plans of the unit room segments in “A Home in a Prairie Town” with Wright's furnishing plan for the Martin House (fig. 3), many important similarities come to the fore. The



*Fig. 3—Wright's furnishing plan for the Martin House*



designation of spaces is identical: dining room, living room and library.<sup>7</sup> Both plans (*figs. 2 and 3*) show central furnishing “units” in the dining room and library spaces. These are not physically fixed, but their massiveness in the center of their respective spaces makes them tantamount to the “client proof” built-ins that Wright employed in the Prairie houses and beyond.<sup>8</sup> The units in the “Home in a Prairie Town” drawings are significant in that they are the only movable furnishings shown on the first floor plan; no furnishings are depicted in Wright’s “Hall” (equivalent of Martin reception room) or living room.<sup>9</sup> This adds weight to the notion that the dining room and library units are essential components of Wright’s *gesamtkunstwerk* vision for both houses.

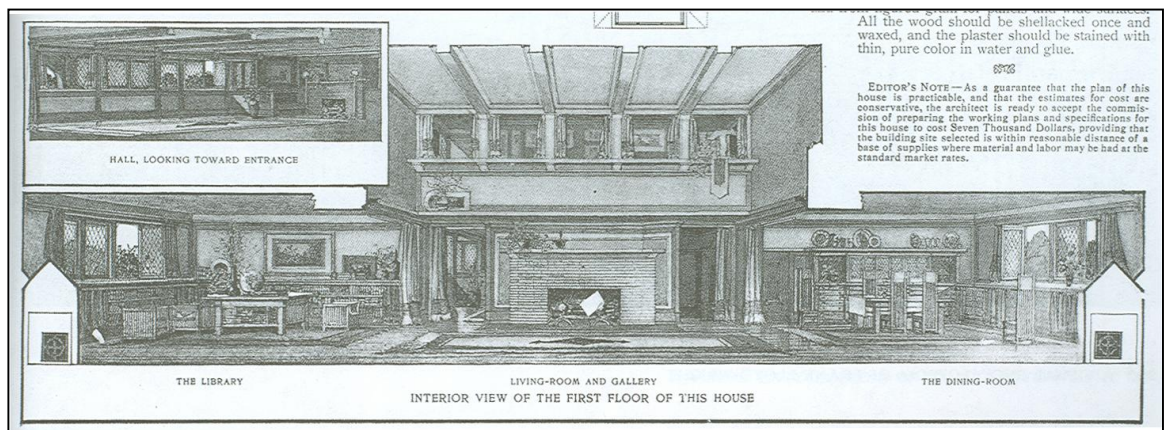


Fig. 4—interior section / perspective

Further examination of the ‘Home in a Prairie Town’ plan and interior elevation reveals proposed detailing of these comprehensive dining and library units. Within the “Home in a Prairie Town” plan, the symbols for the dining and library tables are identical, both suggesting identical corner treatments with lighting / planter stanchions akin to those specified for the Martin House. While the chairs are virtually identical between the two ‘Home in a Prairie Town’ units in plan, their arrangement is rather different. In the dining room, eight chairs are arranged symmetrically around the table (with two stationed against walls in the dining room), while in the library they are more casually arranged, asymmetrically around the table.

Wright’s section / perspective drawing (*fig. 4*) reveals more differences between these chairs and their respective arrangements: the library chairs are low, boxy chairs similar to those from Wright’s own home and studio library (Oak Park),

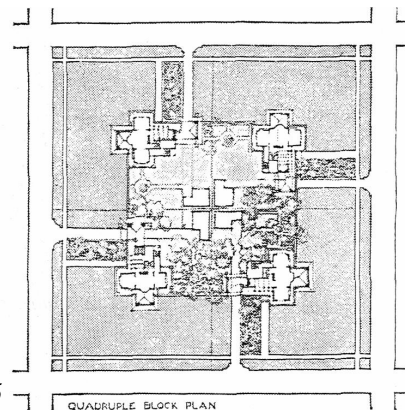


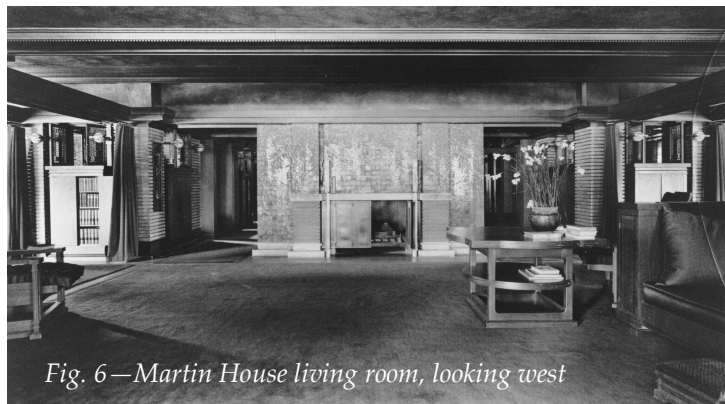
Fig. 5

QUADRUPLE BLOCK PLAN

while the dining chairs are pillar-backed, full length spindle types much like those designed for the Willits and Dana commissions.<sup>10</sup> The perspective drawing of the library (within the elevation) also reveals that the more modular chairs are arranged pinwheel fashion in regard to the square table, with whomever would sit there facing along the edge of the table in various directions. Such an arrangement is in keeping with Wright's scheme of axes in his "quadruple block plan" illustration from 'Home in a Prairie Town' (fig. 5), as well as with later house designs such as Wingspread (1937), pointing to the integration of Wright's thought from macrocosmic to microcosmic levels of design. The many parallels between the 'Home in a Prairie Town' and Martin libraries and dining rooms, whether conceptual or specific, may aid in interpreting the Martin furnishing plan.

The furnishing plan for the Martin House living room, on the other hand, is worked out with little inspiration from its 'Home in a Prairie Town' prototype. The unfurnished voids in both plan and elevation of the latter give no clues as to the intended arrangement of the Martin House living room, but for the suggestion that Wright saw such a space as less beholden to the axially-defined nodes prescribed for library and dining suites. The major, built-in feature of the living room in both plans is the fireplace, and Wright seems to suggest that a large zone—nearly half of the

east / west depth of the room—be left unfurnished in front of the hearth. In the Martin House, only a few pieces extend beyond this implied midline: a symmetrical grouping of three barrel chairs facing an occasional table. The



*Fig. 6—Martin House living room, looking west*



*Fig. 7—Martin House living room, looking east*

profound difference in density of furnishings between the east and west halves of the space is evident in comparing Fuermann's images of the living room (*figs. 6 and 7*). Standing in the Martin House unit room, at the crossing of Wright's master axes "D" and "E" (*fig. 1*)—one can easily understand *why* the majority of furnishings are intended for the east end; in addition to the lowered ceiling height of the east end, the crossing area imparts the almost palpable feeling of space rushing by in three directions, along the axes. Furnishing this area would create an uneasy sensation akin to situating an easy chair on railroad tracks. Conversely, the alcove-like space created at the east end, with its lowered ceiling, is sheltered from such restless space and more conducive to seating.

An alternative to such unfurnished openness in the Martin House living room would have been an inglenook configuration, defined by either built-in or moveable benches or couches. Wright had such an inglenook in his Oak Park home, and employed them in other early designs (*figs. 8 and 9*).<sup>11</sup>



Left: *Fig. 8 – inglenook, Wright home, Oak Park*  
Above: *Fig. 9 – inglenook, Dana-Thomas house*

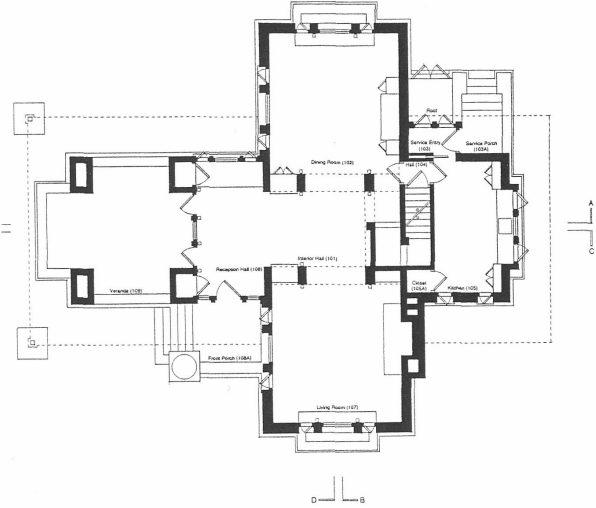
The "Home in a Prairie Town" plan suggests that, as early as 1901, Wright's campaign to banish Victorian compartmentalization in his interiors precluded such a boxy element as an inglenook. By the time of the Martin house commission, Wright was abstracting the traditional inglenook configuration because he was moving beyond the medieval-inspired design conventions of the Arts and Crafts.<sup>12</sup>

The impossibility of partitioning the living room space becomes even more evident when one considers another precedent in the Martin House complex



itself: the Barton House (*fig. 10*). In the “unit room” equivalent of the Barton House, the central space is a transitional zone linking entry and stairway volumes along one axis, and living room and dining room along the other; this zone is “wasted” space in the sense that it defies furnishing much as western half of the Martin House living room does. In light of this precedent, the western half of the Martin house living room may be seen as a passageway between library and dining room, a volume of connecting space that has accumulated around the north / south axis of the unit room. This interpretation may illuminate why Wright left the “Home in a Prairie Town” living room devoid of furnishings. It also sheds light on why the Martin House living room proved a difficult space to furnish, and why the Martins may have given the room relatively little use.<sup>13</sup>

*Fig. 10—Barton House first floor plan*



## Implications for the Martin House Furnishings Plan

### Dining Room

The Martin House dining room as furnished flows most logically and directly from its precedents in “A Home in a Prairie Town” (*fig. 2*) and Wright’s furnishing plan (*fig. 3*). The built-in buffet and symmetrical, central grouping of table and chairs follows the arrangement shown in Wright’s plan, in turn an elaboration of its “Home in a Prairie Town” prototype.

### Living Room

The Martins made many changes to the precise arrangement of individual pieces of furniture prescribed by Wright’s plan (the sofa shifted position, as did the piano, among others),<sup>14</sup> but the furnishings as a whole stayed within the eastern “alcove.”<sup>15</sup> Note that another of the Fuermann images of the living room shows the northeast portiere drawn a few feet behind the sofa, apparently to provide an implied extension of the furnishable alcove space. Even with furniture “spilling out” beyond the midline of the living room,

the furnishable space may have crossed the line from cozy to cramped, encouraging the Martins to utilize the reception room as additional living space.

## Library

It is difficult to reconcile the available evidence of the library's furnishings. First, there is an apparent evolution of the library furnishing plan from "A Home in a Prairie Town" to Wright's plan: the latter is a more symmetrical arrangement of chairs and couches, akin to the dining room array. The more relaxed, "pinwheel" geometry of the "Home in a Prairie Town" library grouping is instead seen in the tea table arrangement in the southeast quadrant of the reception room in Wright's plan.

The photographs of the library suggest that the Martins took many liberties from Wright's plan when furnishing the space (*see Furnishings Plan sections 2C and 3A*).<sup>16</sup> Recent forensic examination of the extant library table suggests that it was built as drawn by Wright, with the top and legs virtually identical to the dining table, but was extensively modified later by the Martins (*see Appendix B for more detail on these modifications*).

The question remains of the placement and orientation of the two library couches, as Wright's plan does not provide enough detail to indicate whether they should be facing toward or away from the table. However, considering the proposed design of the library table, with its built-in lighting units on opposite corners, the intended orientation may have been facing away from the table, such that the light source would be just over one's shoulder when seated to read. In any case, this interpretation relates only to Wright's ideal intentions for the library furnishings, as the Martins placement of the couches may have been entirely different (*see Furnishings Plan sections 2C and 3A*).

## Reception Room

This analysis of the unit room *vis a vis* the model of "A Home in a Prairie Town" and the apparent tension between Wright's program for—and the Martins' understanding of—the spatial qualities of the house also comes to bear on interpretation of furnishings in the reception room. Practically, the Martins may have used the reception room more because it was not subject to the same axial openness as the living room crossing of the unit room space. Like the dining room and library, the reception room may be

described as a “terminal” space. It could therefore be furnished more fully and comfortably, with little disruption to the inherent flow of traffic through the house.

This is born out in the fact that a partial inglenook—like half of the one in the Dana-Thomas house—was created through the addition of a sofa to the west of and at a right angle with the reception room fireplace arch.<sup>17</sup> This sofa also functions as a low partition, isolating a passage along the western wall from the bursar’s office entrance to the kitchen door. The massive bronze firewood boxes designed to flank the hearth and provide naturally-warmed bench seating also form an abstracted inglenook. The addition in this area of a Stickley tea table with chairs grouped around it creates an additional node—secondary to the grouping of table and chairs in the southwest corner—of furnishings near the hearth, establishing a more familiar (and presumably more comfortable) seating area for the Martins and their guests.

## Conclusion

Wright’s vision for the prototypical Prairie house as presented in “A Home in a Prairie Town” contributes to our understanding of the Martin House “unit” room only to a point. Wright’s drawings for the *Ladies Home Journal* article represent an ideal, though incomplete vision of how custom-designed furnishings were to abide in concert with the spatial envelope of the house and its interior spaces as defined. Moreover, these drawings show constellations of furnishings that sacrifice flexibility and—one might argue—functionality to the axial symmetry of the composition of the house as a whole.

Wright’s *tout ensemble* furnishings plan for the Martin House is a more evolved descendent of the “Home in a Prairie Town” floor plan, but it retains some of the idealized awkwardness of its ancestor. The *tout ensemble* drawing is closer to the ultimate array of furnishings on the first floor of the house, circa 1907, representing a step in the continuum from Wright’s somewhat unfocused, initial concept to the Martins’ settled arrangement of furniture in their home. To the extent that the tenuous concepts for furnishing the “Home in a Prairie Town” prototype are imposed on the comprehensively-designed environment Wright created for the Martins, they limit the capacity for reflection of individual clients that Wright claimed of the Prairie house.<sup>18</sup>

This analysis may provide insight not only into the evolution of furnishing plans in major Prairie houses such as the Martin House, but ultimately into Wright's ongoing struggle to reconcile the functional aspects of chairs, couches, tables and *et cetera* with the more radical spatial experimentation of the Prairie period—a struggle that will find resolution decades later in the increasingly built-in environments of many Usonian houses.

## Notes

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1. Letter, DDM to FLW, 28 January, 1905 (University at Buffalo Archives).
2. I am indebted to Martin House Curator, Jack Quinan, for this observation. The modified "Home in a Prairie Town" plan from the Chicago Architectural Club catalogue is illustrated in Hasbrouck Peterson Associates Historic Structure Report for the Darwin D. Martin House, p. 11.
3. Letter, DDM to FLW, 26 December, 1903 (University at Buffalo Archives).
4. Letter, DDM to FLW, 12 August, 1904 (University at Buffalo Archives).
5. Letter, FLW to DDM, 17 August, 1904 (University at Buffalo Archives).
6. Quinan, Jack, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House: Architecture as Portraiture* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 172. "A Home in a Prairie Town" appeared in *Ladies Home Journal*, February, 1901.
7. Wright's furnishing plan for the Martin House is not annotated as such, but these identifications are made in other drawings and correspondence pertaining to the Martin House.
8. "Client proof" was Wright's witticism for built-in furniture—pieces that were immune from clients' attempts to rearrange Wright's intentionally architectonic environments.
9. No moveable furnishings are shown in the living room, although the drawing does appear to specify a built-in bench seat along the east wall.
10. In an intermediate stage, the Martin dining chairs would have been of this type as well; Wright ultimately reduced the height of the spindled backs at the Martins' insistence.
11. High-backed settles flanking the hearth create a modified inglenook in the Dana-Thomas house.
12. This despite the fact that the "Home in a Prairie Town" design retains certain neo-medieval details such as the diamond-paned leaded windows.
13. Anecdotes from the Martin children regarding use of the two first floor fireplaces suggests that the family used the living room less than the

reception room on a daily basis (see HFR5018, transcript of interview with Dorothy Martin Foster).

14. Wright's piano design, shown in the plan as well as a separate perspective drawing, was never executed. Rather, the Martins acquired a Steinway grand piano in November, 1912 with a quartersawn oak veneer to match the Martin House woodwork. A photograph of that year by Müller shows the Steinway in the southeast corner of the living room alcove.
15. The relationship between the east and west halves of the living room may also be seen as that of extended hearth and detached inglenook, with the hearth providing a more distant focal point for the comfortable "conversation area" of the east alcove. Indeed, Giannini's brilliant mosaic surround for the fireplace seems to require such distance to be appreciated.
16. Two photographs of the furnished library are known (apparently amateur snapshots, not Fuermann images), but they are undated. Judging by context, they may be as early as 1909. These images show a library table, but the grouping of chairs and couches—not to mention the built-in lighting—prescribed by Wright's plan has been substantially altered.
17. Although the reception room sofa is Wright-designed (as evidenced by its drawing), it is unclear whether it was requested by the Martins or specified by Wright (or added through some mutual agreement).
18. See Quinan, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House: Architecture as Portraiture* for a discussion of the Prairie house as a portrait of its owner.



#### IV. HISTORICAL INFORMATION



*Martin House from Jewett Parkway. Photo by Fuermann and Sons, 1907*

## A. NOTES ON SOURCES

The MHRC created Volume I of this Historic Furnishings Report as a compendium of primary resources for the development of Volume II, the Furnishings Report for selected spaces to be interpreted in the Martin House. Volume I consists primarily of a series of five catalogs that encompass and organize collections of documents, photographs, objects and miscellaneous materials that inform this Historic Furnishings Report.

The copious body of Martin House documentation identified to date has been divided into five main catalogs for ease of research and cross-referencing. These catalogs are supplemented with a selected bibliography of relevant secondary sources and various appendixes representing unpublished or rare materials.

Many items in the various catalogs carry previous accession or reference numbers, but all records have been given a new ðHFRö number in order to establish a consistent, comprehensive system of reference within the context of this report.

Organization within catalogs is prescribed by various factors, according to what is most logical for that particular kind of documentation or collection.

### I. Furnishings Collections

- Objects are generally organized by type of furnishing, with miscellaneous items at the end.
- Many records include cross-referencing with relevant records in the photographs and drawings catalogs.

### II. Photographs

- Photographs by Fuermann & Sons are first, by Fuermann's original numbering system; the Muller photographs of 1912 are next; miscellaneous photographs are last.
- Photographs are reproduced with minimal cropping.
- For excellent reproductions of many photographs, see Quinan, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House: Architecture as Portraiture*.

### III. Letters

- Comprised of selected transcriptions of Wright / Martin and other correspondence from the University Archives (University at Buffalo) collection.
- Letters are organized chronologically.
- Every attempt has been made to preserve the formatting of the original document.

### IV. Drawings

- Drawings are organized by original collection.
- Art glass drawings are included for the sake of general design context.

V. Misc. Resources

- A collection of various primary and secondary sources—tapes of interviews with the Martin children are available in the University Archives.

## B. OVERVIEW OF WRIGHT'S ARCHITECTURAL PRINCIPLES

As a prime example of Wright's work of the Prairie period, the Martin House complex demonstrates a number of fundamental principles of Wright's overarching design philosophy. It is surely useful, therefore, to consider an overview of these principles before attempting a comprehensive understanding of Wright's approach to interiors and furnishings.

A recurring, multifaceted theme throughout Wright's *oeuvre* is that of the relationship between the built and natural environment. Wright felt that buildings should be "of the site" rather than "on the site," and began early in his career to describe this approach as "organic architecture." This approach necessitated a unity between the building envelope and elements of the interior: furnishings, art glass, and custom-designed or architect-selected *objet d'art*. The Martin House complex provides an excellent example of this wholly unified approach.

There are many interrelated aspects to Wright's concept of organicism, and the term itself is self-reflexive, in that it grew and evolved over the course of Wright's many writings on his own work. Along with the issue of the building-site relationship, Wright's organicism addresses the integration of structure and ornament in a building, the direct, "honest" application of materials, and utilization of the many inspirations found in nature's fundamental geometry.

The principles of Wright's architecture in general seem to proceed from the "master" principle of organicism.

Principle 1: Organicism, to be achieved as follows:

Principle 2: *Natural materials, used naturally / integral ornament versus applied decoration:* In Wright's grammar of building materials, organicism was accomplished by using what nature provided: wood, stone, clay brick and tiles, and metals such as gold and copper. "Bring out the nature of the materials," he extolled, meaning that the essential colors, textures and qualities of plasticity of each should shine through in the building.

Principle 3: Fitness for the site: For a building to fulfill his definition of organic architecture, Wright believed that it ought to integrate naturally with the site, enhancing the landscape, rather than competing with it. In making his beloved prairie landscape the inspiration for the Prairie Houses, he said, "we should recognize and accentuate this natural beauty, its quiet level. Hence, gently sloping roofs, low proportions, quiet sky lines, suppressed heavy-set chimneys and sheltering overhangs, low terraces and out-reaching walls sequestering private gardens." Wright's intention was to make the building appear to be growing out of the ground beneath it.

Principle 4: Breaking the Box: Wright was determined to dismantle the box-like rooms of traditional domestic architecture, believing that modern, healthful living depended on open space and freedom of movement for individuals inhabiting that space. Wright developed his own version of the open floor plan, an architectural revolution that redefined the very concept of interior space and paralleled those of modernists such as Le Corbusier and Adolph Loos. He began by eliminating the right-angle corners of rooms, thereby eliminating the "box" and allowing spaces to flow into one another. In this condition, space is defined by the occupant's perception of spatial enclosure, rather than by defining edges formed by walls.

Principle 5: Continuous, Free-flowing space: Wright believed that interior spaces provided the definitive reality of a building—the essential elements that would form the experience of habitation. In the Prairie Houses, Wright created interior spaces that flowed and penetrated into one another, permitting freer movement and interaction among family members than most typical houses of the era. Wright frequently employed cantilevers—horizontal planes that extended outward from the enclosure of the building—to expand his buildings outward into the landscape and question the traditional distinction between indoors and outdoors.

Principle 6: Design from the inside out: Wright designed from inside to out; he began by developing the interior plan and its function, allowing the exterior to develop as an envelope to define the spaces within. He wove nature consistently into the experience of habitation by: framing views of the garden or landscape; allowing interior rooms to flow outdoors; employing the same materials in both exteriors and interiors; "breaking" the corners of buildings to allow light and air greater penetration to interiors.

These principles could be organized and explicated in a number of different ways, but their gestalt would remain the same. One should keep the essence of these principles in mind when proceeding to consider the social and historical circumstances behind the use and furnishing of spaces in the Martin House.

## C. ANALYSIS OF HISTORIC OCCUPANCY

### The Martin Family and the Martin House Complex

The process of the Martins' planning, detailing, constructing and moving into the Martin House and its associated complex at the corner of Jewett Parkway and Summit Avenues is well documented. The voluminous Wright's Martin papers at the University Archives, University at Buffalo, details this odyssey from the first meeting of Darwin Martin and Frank Lloyd Wright (1902) to groundbreaking for the main Martin House (1904) to the first alterations (1909) and beyond.<sup>1</sup>

Martin House Senior Curator, Jack Quinan has transcribed and cataloged many of these letters primarily between 1902 and 1909. Much of this research comes to bear on Quinan's 2004 monograph on the Martin House, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House: Architecture as Portraiture*, which offers a narrative of the Wright-Martin relationship, the creation of the house and its furnishings, and the possible meanings behind the buildings. Quinan's work is invaluable to understanding the intricately interwoven relationship between Wright, the Martins, and the Martin House complex.

The Martin family—Darwin D. Martin (1865-1935), Isabelle Martin (1869-1945), and their children, Dorothy Martin Foster (1896-1980) and Darwin R. Martin (1900-1979)—occupied the Martin House for over thirty years, from the time they moved in (with the house not yet complete) in 1905 until 1935 when Darwin D. Martin died.<sup>2</sup> The Martin House complex also incorporated servants' quarters and housing for as many as three other families: the Barton family in the Barton House, the Thorpe family in the carriage house apartment and, after 1909, a series of gardeners and their families in the gardener's cottage.



### Wright's *tout ensemble* and the Martins' Room Use

The cult-like regard for Wright's *oeuvre* has often overshadowed the fact that his domestic commissions were all designed for specific clients, each with their own unique backgrounds, personalities and personal history—qualities that were not transformed the moment these clients moved into their Wright-designed houses. The Martins were no exception to this, as detailed in sections III (essay) and IV D (Evidence of Room Use and Furnishings).

Despite the many significant variations between Wright's original, ideal vision for furnishing the Martin House and the Martins' personalized *décor*, the evidence indicates that the Martins did furnish their home largely within parameters set by Wright: furnishings designed or specified by the architect. For the Martin House, this short list of approved suppliers apparently included Gustav Stickley, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Heintz Art Metal and various Asian decorative objects, especially Japanese textiles, ceramics and *ukiyo-e* prints. Wright allowed the Martins four overstuffed easy chairs for their comfort in the living room and reception room, but foamed at the mouth when Isabelle Martin insisted on inserting a pair of rocking chairs into his otherwise symmetrical, architectonic plan for furnishing the library.<sup>3</sup>

While there is some evidence of paint colors being changed in some of the rooms of the Martin House, there is no indication that the Martins undertook major redecoration of the house during their thirty year occupancy.<sup>4</sup> Family photos from the 1920s show many of the original, Wright designed furnishings still in place (though their location may have changed). Even when the Martins replaced major furnishings, they stayed within the bounds of Wright design; the original dining table was replaced later by a round table (HFR1054), apparently from the Larkin Administration building.



Martin House library, undated photo

The Martins used the rooms of the Martin House largely as Wright had intended, with the possible exception of the reception room. Assumed to be a formal space to receive social callers to the house, in keeping with late Victorian conventions, the room instead may have become a second living room or family room for the Martins, while the living room proper took on the role of well-preserved parlor.<sup>5</sup> The addition of a high-backed sofa perpendicular to the reception room fireplace, tea table and easy chairs to Wright's more spare, formal furnishing plan for the reception room suggest such an early shift in room use.

The question of formal, semi-public reception space versus more informal, private family space may



Martin House Reception room. Photo by Fuermann and Sons, 1907



ultimately be moot as applied to the Martin reception room and living room in light of the openness of Wright's floor plan. As the Martins settled into the house, this immutable openness may have encouraged them to abandon some of their notions of socially-coded compartmentalization. Such social adjustments demonstrate one underlying intent of Wright's open planning of the Prairie house: to encourage his clients to live in a more modern, democratic manner, the free flow of space encouraging the free flow of its occupants and their daily activities.

See Section IV C for more discussion of Wright's spatial concepts and intended furnishings plan for the Martin House's unit room (dining room, living room and library).

### **Daily Life and Entertaining**

As the Martins were relatively private people, direct evidence of their daily routines, recreational activities and entertaining in the Martin House complex is limited. Recollections by Martin family descendants suggest that Darwin and Isabelle Martin did not eagerly participate in the more ostentatious social rituals of Turn-of-the-Century Buffalo's wealthy elite. Darwin Martin's service on various Buffalo boards and support of various civic projects is documented in the local papers, but the public profile of the Martins remains relatively low as compared to that of other Buffalo millionaires such as the Albrights and Goodyears. That said, the Martins did entertain relations and friends often in more intimate gatherings in their home, and occasionally held larger parties.

Many aspects of Wright's Prairie house concept facilitated privacy, from the deep shadows produced by the broadly cantilevered eaves, to the semi-concealed entrances to the inherent screening effect of the iridized art glass windows. While there was probably no need for the Martins to be sheltered from passing paparazzi, the house, like all of Wright's Prairie houses, is designed for the occupants to feel secure and selectively cloistered from the outside world, with spaces designed as vantage points, screened from prying eyes.



Martin House, pergola and gardens. Photo by Fuermann and Sons, 1907



Darwin Martin's diary, "Memorandum in the Life of Darwin D. and Isabelle R. Martin," does provide some insight into the family's habits, particularly in regard to socializing and entertaining in the house. First, Martin's numerous entries pertaining to overnight visits from Frank Lloyd Wright and his family (at both old and new Martin residences), as well as similar stays for the Martin family at Wright's Oak Park home, attest to the close relationship between the two men.

Second, the diary, along with other evidence in the Martin papers, attests to the importance of family ties to Darwin Martin. The most prominent example of this is the Barton House itself, an edifice that represents Martin's campaign to gather his siblings around him in Buffalo; he built the house for his older sister, Delta, and her family. Martin's diary refers to frequent gatherings with the Bartons over dinner. In fact, his discussion with Wright of the evolving design for the Martin House dining table reveals that he requested the table be made expandable, and enough chairs be produced so that the Martin family of four and the Barton family of three may dine together "without turning somersaults."<sup>6</sup>

Other records of social life in Martin's diary describe small dinner parties with close friends, neighbors and church associates (Christian Science). Such parties were often to mark occasions such as birthdays or anniversaries, again attesting to the emphasis on milestones in family life. The Martins did occasionally, however, hold larger, more formal parties. The best documented of these is the reception they gave in November, 1906 to welcome friends, neighbors and professional associates (232 people, including Wright) to their new home. Commonly described by Martin House docents and staff as the "Chrysanthemum party," this event featured a décor based on different color chrysanthemums for different rooms of the house.<sup>7</sup>

Other large gatherings at the Martin House were held primarily in the basement "Playroom" space. Martin notes a Holiday party (December, 1906): "Party, with supper, for servants and 40 friends. All these last affairs were given in playroom." In 1919, a tea was given for Dorothy Martin, with 225 guests in attendance. Dorothy Martin's wedding to James Foster, June 14, 1923, witnessed by 300 guests, was surely the most festive social occasion held at the house. Family photographs from the wedding show that an altar was set up on the east side of the pergola, with a processional approach defined by rows of flowers planted for the occasion. A large tent was set up over the drying yard on the west side of the pergola to accommodate the reception.



Dorothy Martin Foster on her wedding day, 1923

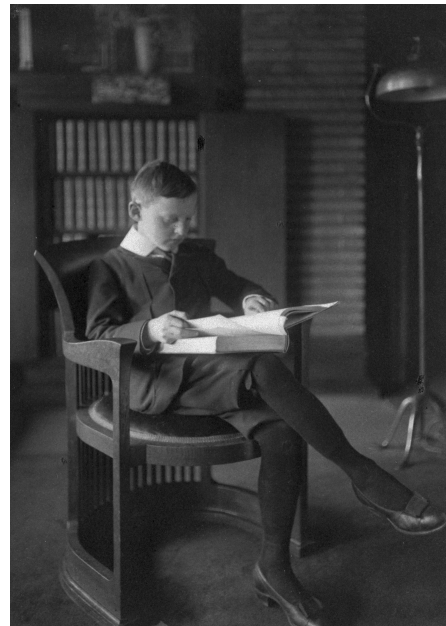
Entertainment for the Martin family consisted of common pastimes of the era, such as amateur musical performances and reading aloud. The Martins had a piano in their Summit Avenue house, and acquired a new one soon after occupying their new house. Wright had designed a piano case for the Martins as part of the *tout ensemble* furnishings plan, but by 1909, apparently frustrated with the protracted process of furniture completion, the Martins acquired a more conventional, oak-veneered Steinway grand for the living room. Dorothy Martin was the primary pianist of the family, giving some semi-professional recitals as a young adult. Darwin Martin's diary mentions a Christmas gathering in 1914 with carol singing accompanied by Dorothy on piano and Darwin R. on violin. The Martins also acquired a Victrola, used in the library for other musical entertainment.



Dorothy Martin playing the piano, 1912

Due to Isabelle Martin's degenerative eye condition, reading aloud by Darwin was a personal pastime that began in the couple's courtship.<sup>8</sup> Mr. Martin later expanded this activity to include reading aloud to the whole family, sometimes at the dinner table, and occasionally for a wider, invited audience. A number of informal, portrait photographs of the Martins show family members reading, further emphasizing the role of books in their everyday life.

Although Isabelle Martin's influence in the design of the Martin House and its furnishings is largely indirect, her requests and suggestions filtered through her husband's voluminous correspondence with Wright, there are many reflections of her presence in the house and of her use of its spaces for conducting the expected social interactions of the day.<sup>9</sup> The isolation from the traditional social core of Buffalo (downtown and Delaware district) of the planned, suburban community of Parkside encouraged the formation and maintenance of women's social circles in the neighborhood. To this end, there are various indications in the



Darwin R. Martin reading, seated in barrel chair, 1912

documentation of the Martin House planning that Isabelle's station as wife of an up-and-coming business executive and millionaire quietly drove certain aspects of the Martins' desire for a large house that was conducive to social networking and entertaining.

A survey of Mrs. Martin's social activities in the house indicates that the house became a neighborhood center (perhaps one of many) for progressive, culturally minded women. Isabelle was a charter member of the Highland Park Literary Club, a sort of literary salon, and the group met regularly in the Martins' Summit Avenue home and later in the Martin House. Such meetings were probably held in the basement ballroom or playroom.<sup>10</sup> Mrs. Martin also built upon the family's musical identity; she was a leading member of the Chromatic Club, an amateur musical society that brought performances to the Martin House—presumably held in the living room where the piano was located.

Isabelle utilized the Martin House reception room and dining room for their traditional functions on a regular basis, entertaining female callers through frequent teas and luncheons. Such proactive, social networking was expected of a woman of her station, and the large service areas and reception space of the house made it conducive to these activities. Though Wright's plan for the house begins to challenge the clear social compartmentalization of spaces, the tradition of ladies' calling on one another—particularly in a suburban enclave such as Parkside—persisted and imposed some degree of social ritual on the otherwise freely-interacting spaces of the Martin House.

The influence of Mrs. Martin's love of gardening on the design of the Martin House complex and its furnishings should also be considered. Isabelle's passion for horticulture surely drove the protracted process of furnishing the complex with a working greenhouse, resulting in Wright's concept of a formal conservatory as well as a non-Wrightian, utilitarian greenhouse. Fresh cut flower arrangements decorated the Martin House on a regular basis, necessitating a number of plant stands. Seven of these, in three different designs, remain in the Martin House collection. The Martins also had at least one antique, Asian plant stand that might have been recommended to them by Wright. While locations for these stands are suggested in the Furnishings Plan to follow, they should be



Isabelle Martin picking flowers in west garden bed, c. 1910

considered ðat largeö in the house, as their positions surely changed with the shifting needs of seasonal flower arrangements.

### **Servants and Types of On-site Housing**

The Martin House complex is unique among Wrightö multi-building complexes in that it encompasses many different tiers of socially-coded housing. There are at least four such levels represented on the site: the large Martin House for the affluent patrons and their domestic staff, the Barton House for a middle class family, the carriage house apartment and gardenerö cottage for specialized, on-site service staff, and apartments in the main house for other servants. This array of housing within the Martin House complex displays a full range of dwelling types within Wrightö Prairie house mode.

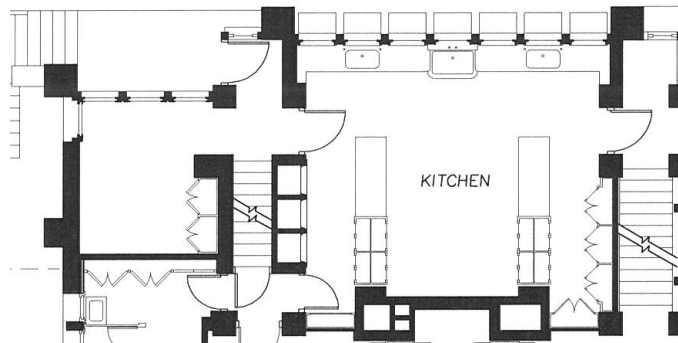


Barton House. Photo by Fuermann and Sons, 1907

After the main Martin House, the Barton House presents the second tier of socially-coded housing varieties within the complex. Built for the Barton family of three (Darwin Martinö sister, Delta, her husband, George Barton and their daughter, Laura), the house represents middle-class tenancy on the property; Darwin Martin had the house built and leased it to his sister. The Barton House also demonstrates the importance of extended family to Darwin Martin. He created a multi-family compound that he may have considered extending even further at one point.<sup>11</sup>

It is unclear exactly how many servants the Martins employed at any given time, and how many lived in on-site housing. A look at the second floor plan of the Martin House, however, indicates that two servants could have resided comfortably on the north side of the house; two modest bedrooms open off the service corridor on the west side of the house, with a shared bathroom and proximity to the service stairs that lead to the kitchen. Though designated only as "Seventh" and "Eighth" bedrooms on Wright's plan, these rooms likely would have been occupied by two head servants such as a head cook and head maid. The U. S. Census of 1910 identifies two servants living at 125 Jewett Parkway (the Martin House): Anna (possibly Joanna) Shultz and Katherine Kidd. Thus, we can presume that these were the two live-in staff members that the Martins hired upon moving in to the Martin House or soon thereafter. There might well have been other day help to assist Shultz and Kidd with cooking and cleaning in a house as large as the Martins', including Schultz's sister, Augusta.<sup>12</sup> 1925 records list one Margaret Gibbons and one Freda Vogt residing in the Martin House. Vogt is identified by other staff descendants (Bill Thorpe) as the head cook, so she and Gibbons might have been later replacements for Shultz and Kidd, suggesting a changing roster of staff over the years of the Martins' residency.

Service areas of the Martin House also included the large, ground floor kitchen, adjacent servants' dining room and basement rooms (for laundry, window screen storage, etc.) on the west side of the house. Service areas of the house are not quite as isolated as the traditional, "backstairs" arrangement, though they are efficiently organized along with the in-house staff apartments in the west and north of the house. Wright attempted to facilitate the staff's comfort and convenience in operating the household by designing a spacious, efficiently appointed kitchen, with fine views out the north bank of windows across the kitchen gardens. This design's release of the staff from what might otherwise be a basement kitchen is another example of Wright's "democratic" principles at work. Wright also made the basement work spaces more pleasant and conducive to staff's work by admitting natural light through the banks of "sun traps" along the north and south elevations of the house.



Plan of Martin House service area

The flat on the upper floor of the carriage house is another area of staff housing built into the complex. Its occupancy is better documented than the servants' rooms in the Martin House.<sup>13</sup> Oral histories and photographs from descendants of the Thorpe family indicate that the Martins' horseman / chauffeur, William Thorpe, lived in this

apartment with his wife, Anne and son, Arthur from 1907 until the late 1940s. The residence consisted of a living room / dining room, kitchen, bathroom and one bedroom. The adjacent hay loft space on the north of the building may have been divided later to provide additional bedrooms, with one for Arthur Thorpe. William Thorpe's nephew described the entire carriage house as Thorpe's domain, comprising a convenient live / work arrangement that must have given the Thorpes a sense of ownership of this parcel of the property.

With the extensive gardens and grounds of the Martin complex, it was logical if not essential for the Martins to employ a full time gardener. The Martins' call for Wright to design a gardener's cottage as part of the multi-structure estate is the most obvious evidence of the importance of this aspect of the estate's operation. Discussion of this building began with Wright in 1905; after a series of revised plans, the cottage was constructed in 1909. The

cottage occupies a long, narrow lot that fronts on Woodward Avenue. This parcel connects to the rest of the Martins' property on the east, with their utilitarian, kit-built greenhouse occupying the eastern half of the lot.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the gardener's

cottage / greenhouse area would have comprised another live / work zone for another prominent Martin staff member and his family. The Martins had employed a series of gardeners since 1904, but Thomas Skinner (employed 1906-16) was the first gardener to live in the new cottage.<sup>15</sup> Skinner was succeeded by George Fellows and Reubin Polder (who may have been a more general maintenance man), though the dates of their potential occupancies of the cottage are unclear.



L to R: William Thorpe, Arthur Thorpe (unidentified man behind)



Gardener's cottage from Woodward Avenue

The relationships between the Martins and their staff members may be described generally as close and loyal. The son of maid Anna Schultz related that his mother and aunt, Augusta (also a maid), were proud of their employment. Bill Thorpe, William Thorpe's nephew, attests to the kindness and generosity of the Martins toward the Thorpe family; when he visited his aunt and uncle at the Martin House complex, he was made to feel as one of an extended family. In a poignant turn of

financial fate, a Thorpe family letter of 1934 documents a \$2,000 loan that had been made by William Thorpe to Darwin Martin.<sup>16</sup> Like the Thorpes, Thomas Skinner apparently enjoyed a close relationship with the Martins; he was married in the living room of the Martin House in May 1907.<sup>17</sup>



## D. EVIDENCE OF ROOM USE AND FURNISHINGS

### Entry Hall and Reception Room

#### Turn-of-the-Century Entry Halls / Reception Rooms

Today, the term "reception room" connotes an institutional, semi-public space where one waits for an appointment with a doctor, lawyer or other professional. Domestically speaking, the term is now obsolete, associated with the Victorian ritualization of family life, particularly in regard to the interface between public and private spheres. Entry halls and reception spaces served as a sort of social "air lock" in highly compartmentalized Victorian interiors, ensuring tightly controlled transitions between the enclave of the home and the outside world.

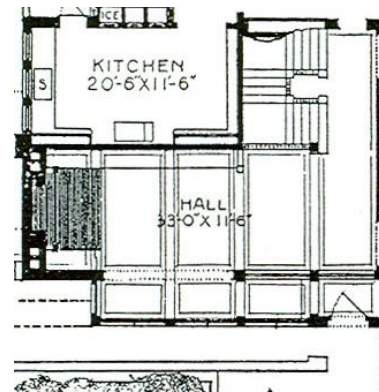
Although there is certainly no standard floor plan for the eclectic type that is the Turn-of-the-Century house, it generally featured a series of spaces that defined formally the entry sequence. From the front door (with or without a vestibule), this sequence would typically proceed into an entry hall or "stair hall" with the main staircase emanating off-axis. Either a reception room or "front parlor" (not synonymous terms) would be found to one side of this entry hall, with a drawing room or "back parlor" behind or, alternately, symmetrically balancing the front parlor or reception room on the other side of the hall. In either case, pocket doors or portieres were often provided to close off the drawing room / back parlor from general callers, thereby giving them clear visual cues (if not also guided by servants) as to what route to follow when entering the house.

In Victorian houses, the front parlor was used as a showpiece to impress visitors at the public / private interface of the house, while the drawing room (from *withdrawing* room) was a more intimate (and often more comfortably furnished) inner sanctum often used by women to "withdraw" from the men after a dinner party. The back parlor therefore served a function for longer and more familiar social engagements. A *reception room*, however, combined aspects of both front and back parlor, but was not directly analogous to either. Also, reception rooms are largely in the female sphere, as their main function was for the lady of the house to receive her female callers.

Many of Wright's Prairie era (1900-1910) house designs maintain aspects of the late Victorian entry sequence described above, but the spatial arrangement of elements in this sequence varies widely. Moreover, the increasing spatial openness of Wright's Prairie era designs encouraged a relaxation of the ceremonial sequencing of Victorian plans.<sup>18</sup> Wright experimented with various combinations of hall (stair hall or stair-less entry hall) and reception space, molding the traditional sequence to fit the overall geometry of the house and the habits and character of the client.<sup>19</sup>



In Wright's prototype for the Prairie house, the Home in a Prairie Town, the entry hall and reception room concepts are unified in a space simply labeled "Hall." An inset perspective of this room shows a sparsely furnished space with prominent hearth at the far end. Such a "Hall" references the medieval nomenclature of the primary living space (ground floor or upper floor). This is in keeping with certain neo-medieval details of the "Home in a Prairie Town" prototype details which link it to the abstracted historicism of the Arts and Crafts movement.



Plan of Hall from Home in a Prairie Town, 1901

### The Martin House Entry Hall and Reception Room

The Martin House entry hall is designated simply as "Hall" on Wright's 1904 construction drawing (*Halle* in the Wasmuth plans), although Martin referred to it as "reception hall" on occasion, suggesting its functional relationship to the reception room immediately to the west.<sup>20</sup> It serves to connect the main entrance of the house with all of the other main spaces of the first floor (as well as to the second floor via the stairwell), although its spatial emphasis is north-south, along Axis C of the plan of the complex.

Fuermann's photograph demonstrates the main function of the space: to frame the dramatic vista from front door to conservatory niche (with the *Nike* cast) 180 feet away. Wright also achieves this by placing the main stairs to the second floor off-axis and partially screening them from view, effectively concealing them and further opening the hall to the pergola / conservatory vista.



Martin House entry hall. Photo by Fuermann and Sons, 1907

The other main feature of this space is the double-sided fireplace mass covered in wisteria-patterned, glass tile mosaic. This fireplace, with its prominent, built-in andirons, forms a partial room divider between the entry hall and the unit room to the east. Visible from the reception room, which had its own, massive fireplace (the so-called "sunburst" fireplace), the double-sided fireplace prompted Darwin Martin to quip: "Visitors finding two fire-places in the reception hall cannot complain of the coldness of their reception."<sup>21</sup>

The function of the entry hall as a vista-framing space necessitates its openness; it is essentially an unfurnished space, with furnishings limited to the landscape painting of the fireplace, *ukiyo-e* prints on the piers and a few planter vessels, tucked away as to not obscure the vista.

The reception room was to be a formal receiving area, adjacent to the main entrance of the house, for welcoming guests. It may well have been used primarily as a "Ladies' room," supporting the frequent social networking through calling that Isabelle Martin would have been active in. While the western end of the reception room may have served as a reception space for business clients calling on Darwin D. Martin in the bursar's office, the rest of the room is organized to receive general callers to the house during the business day: ladies in Isabelle's social network.<sup>22</sup> The prominent hearth, tea table and small, "slipper" chairs make the space suitable for the social interactions of the woman's sphere.

### **Bursar's Office**

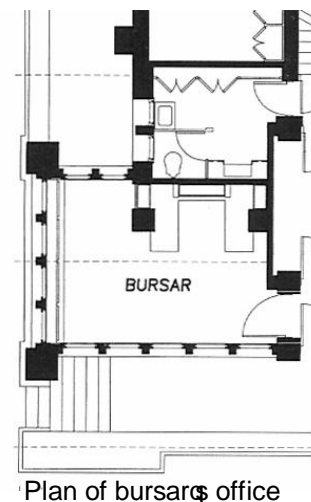
#### **Turn-of-the-Century Home Offices**

In Turn-of-the-Century houses, it was not unheard of (though perhaps not common) for a separate room to be designated as a "home office." The concept of a domestic space reserved for business pursuits has its origins in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (if not earlier), found most often in large homes of professionals or prominent men of business. In more modest homes, a workspace in a home was usually limited to a desk in the library, "study" or "den."<sup>23</sup> Such spaces were offices of a sort, but the implication was of a place to read, write letters and generally pursue a well-cultivated lifestyle (or at least the appearance of one).

The term "home office" is a relatively recent one, quite common today in houses or apartments of all sizes as the lines between work and home life are continually challenged or erased.

#### **The Martin House Bursar's Office**

Wright's designation of the space as *bursar's* office is curious. The general financial connotations of the title have an obvious relation to Martin's position as chief financial officer of the Larkin Company, but the connotation of a treasurer for a university is not so obvious. If Wright considered the academic associations of the word at all, he may have intended them to relate to Martin's bibliophilic tendencies, perhaps using the term as a way to combine Martin's industrious and autodidactic sides. Alternately, the



term may refer simply to a home office used to process the bills and other paperwork associated with such a large property. In at least one letter to Wright, Darwin Martin refers to the office as the "Bursar's [sic] *den*," suggesting that he may have envisioned it as a more general retreat or lounge.<sup>24</sup>

The bursar's office provided Darwin Martin with a dedicated space within the home to pursue his business interests, representing a good example of Wright's program to reflect the character of his client in the house.<sup>25</sup> To this end, the office has various features that make it conducive to Martin's industrious activity. Although contained within the overall envelope of the house, the office is isolated from the adjoining spaces. Access to the room and to the outdoors is by means of passing through pier cluster "G" only. Otherwise, in contrast to the skeletal connections between most other spaces in the house, the office is walled-in on two sides, retreating under the lower roof which continues to the west to form the *porte cochere*. The space is thus sequestered from the rest of the house and from the outside world, the high windows adding to the sheltering sense afforded by the deeply cantilevered eaves.

Along with the privacy supplied by its inherent seclusion, the placement of the bursar's office in the plan is interesting for two other reasons. First, the office is located at the terminus of the house that interfaces with transportation systems, the *porte cochere*, suggesting the importance of the relationship between transportation and business—a relationship that was coming to the fore in the early twentieth century. Second, the office may be interpreted as part of a series of service spaces (kitchen, servants' dining room and coat room / guest bathroom) that wrap the northwest corner of the house. This connection further strengthens the identification of the space as a room for industrious work.

Wright equipped the bursar's office with a built-in desk / secretary unit, nestled between the piers on the north side of the room. While there are no remaining fragments or photographic evidence of this unit, its production is discussed in the Martin / Wright correspondence, and various drawings remain. Other furnishings recommended for the office—desk chair, visitor's chair, etc.—are speculative, but logically follow the intended program of the room.

## **Kitchen**

### **Turn-of-the-Century Kitchens**

The configuration of Turn-of-the-Century kitchens varied widely, depending on the size and opulence of the house and the number of servants (if any) that were to use the space. Throughout the Victorian era, kitchens of large estates were often found in the basement or in a service wing at the back of the plan, where heat and cooking odors could be isolated from living spaces. The general prescription for good kitchen design through the end of the Victorian period included good lighting and

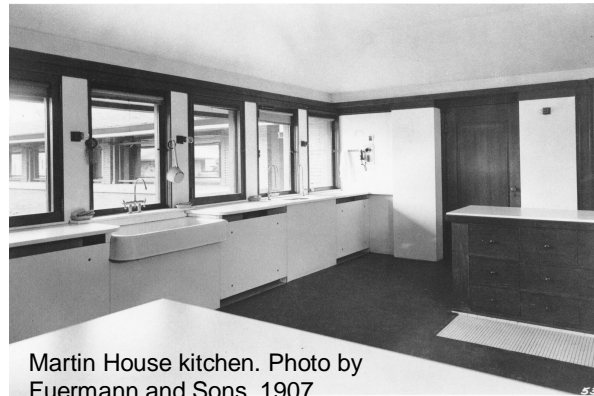
ventilation (often through a dedicated chimney), sufficient storage and ample, portable work surfaces.<sup>26</sup>

Most Victorian kitchens did not have the comprehensively built-in storage and workspace features expected today. Some had enclosed cupboards for storage in free-standing units, the forerunners of the ubiquitous Hoosier cabinet of the early twentieth century. Built-in countertops were also rare at the turn of the century. Instead, food preparation was conducted on one or more free-standing tables—tables that evolved into the informal dining area of the “eat-in” kitchen or breakfast nook of modern kitchens. The obvious advantage of free-standing tables was portability. The work space could be easily rearranged for different tasks, following the natural light and adjusting the flow of workers’ movements as the tasks of the day and season dictated.

By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, kitchens in some progressive houses were showing signs of change. The kitchen in Greene and Greene’s Gamble House, for example, is a spacious, ground floor workspace with details that indicate concern for both aesthetics and fine craftsmanship (in keeping with the other living spaces of the house) and utilitarian efficiency.<sup>27</sup> The bird’s-eye maple-topped work surface, however, was still on a free-standing table, rather than a built-in counter unit, limiting the integration of fixtures in the Gamble kitchen.

### The Martin House Kitchen

Various elements of the Martin House kitchen make it a good example of Wright’s “democratic” principles at work, more akin to progressive equivalents such as the kitchen of the Gamble House than with Late Victorian counterparts. It occupies a large portion of the west wing of the house, comparable in size to the reception room immediately to the south. In keeping with Wright’s spatial concepts of the Prairie house, the Martin kitchen is a fully-integrated component of the plan. It is a bright and airy space, with a bank of windows across the north elevation and “tray” ceiling that lends the room an additional sense of openness.



Martin House kitchen. Photo by Fuermann and Sons, 1907

The term “institutional” comes to mind when considering the layout and fixtures of the Martin house kitchen. Though this may carry connotations of an overly-sterile and monotonous environment, it is an early example of Wright’s progressive thinking with regard to creating an ergonomically viable work space for the modern

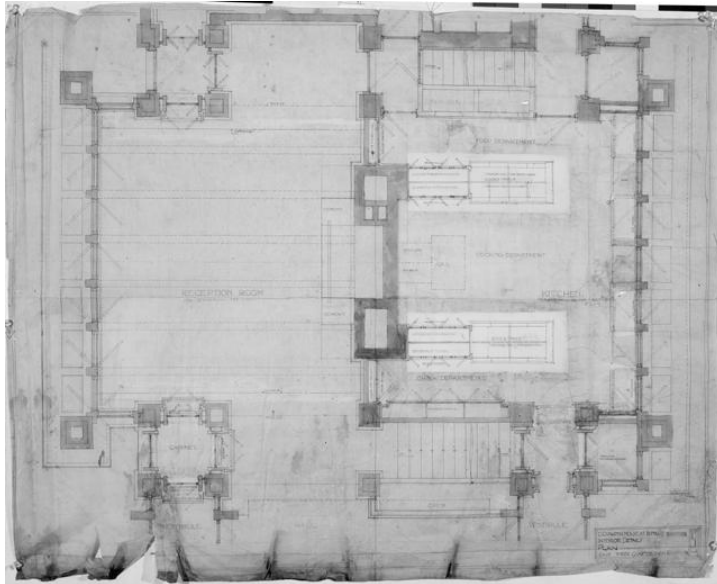
home. This thinking would result ultimately in the ultra-efficient— though often cramped— ôgalleyö kitchens of Wright's Usonian houses.

The most remarkable and progressive feature of the Martin house kitchen for its time is that it constitutes an almost entirely built-in environment: work surfaces, cabinets, sinks and cold storage were all integrated into the design of the space. The moveable work tables of the Victorian kitchen are affixed here as built-in, countertop work surfaces, utilizing opaque ôNovusö glass. This glass was the most durable and sanitary surface available at the time, reflecting the era's general fixation with cleanliness to fight disease.<sup>28</sup>

The countertops appear clearly in the Fuermann photograph of the kitchen and in two of Wright's plans for the space.<sup>29</sup> Of the two drawings, the Martin House restoration architects believe that HFR4016 most closely represents the as-built scheme, where the countertops comprise about half of each peninsula, with higher, glass-doored cabinets on the south end for dry goods, cookware and china storage.

HFR4016 also suggests a production-line approach to the function of the kitchen.

Starting at the top of the drawing and proceeding down, west to east, the designations of built-in icebox, ôFood Department,ö ôCooking Departmentö and ôChina Departmentö leading ultimately through the north end of the entry hall (through pier clusters ôCö and ôDö) and into the dining roomö suggest a logical flow of work in preparing and serving meals, utilizing the built-in environment.



Plan, reception room and kitchen (HFR4016)

The only freestanding furnishings necessary (or feasible) in the Martin house kitchen are stools to allow the staff to sit at the counters during long, repetitive tasks. The servants' dining room to the west presumably would have had a table and chairs for the staff to take meals and relax. There is no direct evidence for the kitchen stools, so their inclusion and placement is speculative, based on a logical need.

## Unit Room—Dining

The Martin House ðunit roomö represents a fascinating evolution of the multifunctional living space of Wright's prototypical Prairie House design introduced in ðA Home in a Prairie Town.ö The Martin House and Robie House ðunitö rooms represent the best examples in the Prairie period of living and dining rooms (with library, in the case of the Martin House) fully integrated into a common envelope of space.

*See Section III for more in-depth analysis of this relationship.*

## Turn-of-the-Century Dining Rooms

Well into the twentieth century, the dining room was the focus of most formal social functions in houses large enough to have a separate space designated for dining. In more modest homes, the dining room might be simply a corner of the main living space, a concept that Wright and other modernists would retain and promote. In more affluent homes, however, the formal dining room was kept exclusively as such, with furnishings always at the ready to serve a formal meal. Typically, one quarter or more of the entire first floor plan of the house would be dedicated to the dining room, often at the back of the house to provide a measure of privacy and proximity to the kitchen for the sake of service.

In any type of home, the dining room was the place where the entire family gathered two to three times per day. It was thus a locus of family life as well as a center for entertaining. With this convergence of identities, the dining room often featured a piece of furniture— a sideboard, buffet or china cabinet— that was the most prized family heirloom, a piece that conveyed both ancestral pride and an antique pedigree. Indeed, if the family did not possess such a centuries-old piece, furniture manufacturers of the day were happy to provide massive, ornate pieces in dark, ðbogö oak or other wood with an equally dark, antiqued finish. This convention often applied to other dining room furniture as well; tasteful dining tables and chairs of the Turn-of-the-Century were of antique European or Colonial American Revival styles.

## The Martin House Dining Room

The Martin House dining room is clearly designated as such on the various presentation plans and construction drawings of the house. Like many of Wright's Prairie-era dining rooms, the Martin dining room demonstrates both traditional and progressive tendencies of



Martin House dining room. Photo by Fuermann and Sons, 1907

this phase of Wright's work. Like its counterparts in many Buffalo mansions of the period, the Martin House dining room is found at the back of the first floor plan, adjacent to the kitchen and with views onto the more private, rear of the lot.<sup>30</sup> In some of the larger, more lavish Prairie houses, Wright also reflects the remnant of a conservatory attached to the dining room in an *exedra* at one end—the space where, in more traditional mansions, one might take breakfast amid potted palms.<sup>31</sup> In houses such as Dana and Robie, these *exedra* become breakfast niches with a satellite set of table and chairs.

The built-in buffet or sideboard is an element of Wright's dining rooms that is on the cusp between traditional and progressive. Such built-ins may be found in even the simplest expression of the Prairie house such as the Barton House. Reflecting Victorian conventions of the heirloom sideboard, Wright lavished these units with art glass cabinet doors and mirrored upper panels. But the built-in nature of these pieces is more in keeping with the comprehensive design environments of Art Nouveau, Jugendstil or Arts & Crafts interiors.<sup>32</sup>

Wright's departure from the traditional in dining room furniture comes to the fore when one considers his design for the Martin dining table and chairs. As designed, this suite incorporated built-in lighting and planter units on the corners of the table, bringing illumination and organic décor into the design. Such elements were common to traditional dining tables in the forms of candelabras and floral centerpieces, but Wright moves them to the corners of the table and makes them more permanent fixtures.<sup>33</sup> Add a set of high-backed chairs designed to harmonize with the *tout ensemble* for the house, and the architectonic units of built-in buffet and table-and-chairs define the dining room within the larger envelope of the unit room.

In the Martin House, this definition—the division of the unit room into three zones—is accomplished by means of frieze rails and portieres, but is equally reliant on the custom furnishings. Whereas late Victorian dining rooms were defined by an envelope of dark paneling and wallpaper, the functional identity of the Martin House dining room is defined by the nested space of the dining sanctuary Wright delineated with furnishings.

## **Unit Room—Living**

### **Turn-of-the-Century Living Rooms**

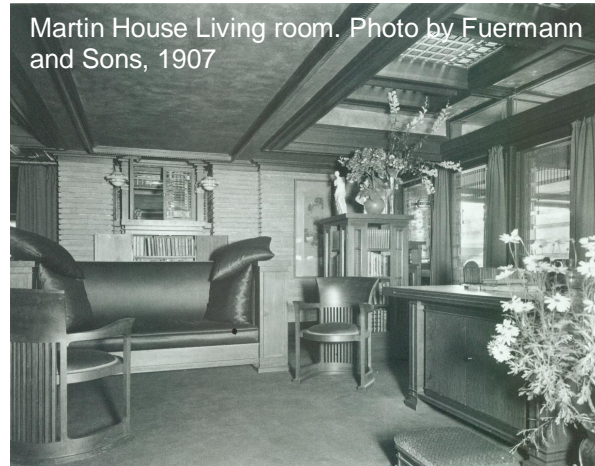
“Living room” is a term that was just becoming a standard in house plans at the turn of the twentieth century. The term is used in Downing's nineteenth century treatise on domestic architecture, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, but almost exclusively for small houses or cottages where there is only one main living space on the first floor. In *Country and Suburban Homes of the Prairie School Period*,



“living room” is used consistently in model home plans presented. In Victorian houses, the closest parallel to the living room would be the drawing room or sitting room, a private space for the relaxation and entertainment of family and invited guests. But “living room” connotes a more informal, multi-purpose space that combines elements of the traditional front and back parlors. It is a more generic designation of space that speaks to changing patterns of familial and social interaction at the Turn-of-the-Century.

### The Martin House Living Room

Wright begins using the designation “living room” on plans for his “bootleg” houses of the 1890s, and continues this nomenclature throughout the Prairie houses.<sup>34</sup> In the course of planning the Martin House, Wright comments to Martin, “Whole 1<sup>st</sup> floor is living room with subdivisions,”<sup>35</sup> thus asserting his developing concept of the open plan while eschewing the traditional compartmentalization of living spaces. Variations on Wright’s



drawings also support this concept of living space transcending individual, box-like rooms. In the drawing for the Martin House complex from Wright’s essay “In the Cause of Architecture” (*Architectural Record*, 1908), for example, the living room and library portions of the Martin unit room are both labeled “A,” designating “Living Rooms” in the legend. As this drawing post-dates the built Martin House, we can rule out the possibility that this labeling reflects a preliminary condition before these two unit room spaces had been programmed as “living room” and “library.”<sup>36</sup> Rather, Wright seems to be accentuating the openness and flexibility of the Martin living space (in the most general sense of the term) for the Wasmuth audience.

The Martin living room, like nearly all of Wright’s living rooms, features a large, prominent hearth which forms one pole of the space’s main axis. The other pole is the terminus of the large veranda to the east. The veranda itself is a continuous space with the living room, a semi-outdoor extension of Wright’s nebulous living room concept. The midline between these two poles is the bank of art glass doors that provided a permeable partition between inside and outside portions of the space.

The sweeping openness of the Martin unit room sets up challenges to practically furnishing the space.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, the majority of furnishings were crowded into the eastern half, where the lowered ceiling and large piers provide a measure of



traditional compartmentalization. Thus, the living room tends to suggest three separate areas: 1) the hearthside area to the west, 2) the “conversation area” of the furnished eastern alcove and 3) the veranda, an outdoor extension of the living room. Perpendicular to the main unit room axis, the living room space as a whole is another demonstration of Wright’s open plan concept, where functions of traditional rooms are replaced by groups of furnishings within the larger, integrated envelope of the house.

The Martin living room provided the family and occasional guests with a venue to pursue two of the family’s favorite means of entertainment: reading aloud and amateur musical performance. The former was afforded by ample book storage (in pier cluster bookcases and built into the furnishings) and tabletops for periodicals, the latter by the Steinway grand piano that occupied a significant portion of the east alcove. At least one oral history refers to the eastern half of the living room as the “music room.”<sup>38</sup>

## Unit Room—Library

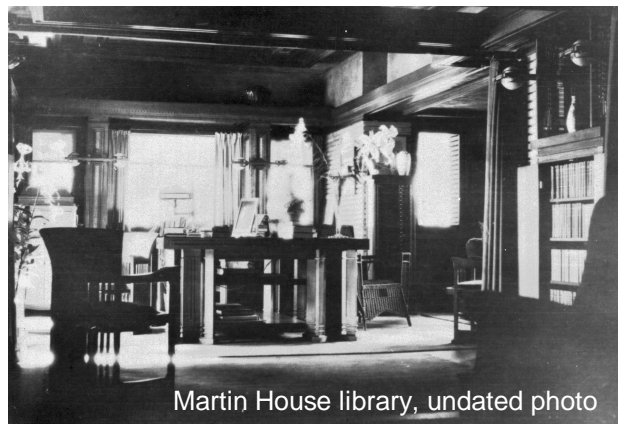
### Turn-of-the-Century Libraries

It was *de rigueur* for the late Victorian family to have a library or “study” in the home, a retreat for reading, writing letters and supplementing the education provided by outside institutions. Even with the advent of public lending libraries, a dedicated space for a private book collection in the home was a status symbol, harkening back to the middle ages when the aristocratic, literate elite might have a small collection of books housed in a locked, reliquary-like cabinet. Owning and displaying an impressive array of books—especially antique books and classics—was a marker of wealth and refinement that persisted well into the twentieth century.

In homes of the affluent, libraries were often gender-coded as masculine spaces, appointed in dark wood paneling, leather upholstery on chairs and sofas and tables draped in heavy, dark cloth or oriental rugs.<sup>39</sup> The books assembled in bookshelves—either built-in or freestanding—may have functioned largely as gilt-spined props; these and other decorative objects such as busts of famous figures, maps and globes served, more often than not, to make the library a show-room for the head of the house to impress his male guests with his apparent cultural acumen.

### The Martin House Library

Following the precedent of “A Home in a Prairie Town,” the library is designated as such on the Martin House construction drawings (August, 1904),



Martin House library, undated photo

completing the dining-living-library trio of the unit room. This space, however, was not a library in the sense that the Martins' entire collection (over 2,000 volumes) was housed and displayed there. Instead, Wright wove book storage into six pier cluster units throughout the first floor of the house, as well as into freestanding bookshelves and even into furniture. The function of the Martin library then shifts somewhat to that of a reading lounge, the books having been dispersed throughout the house in keeping with Wright's assertion that the whole first floor is a living room with subdivisions.

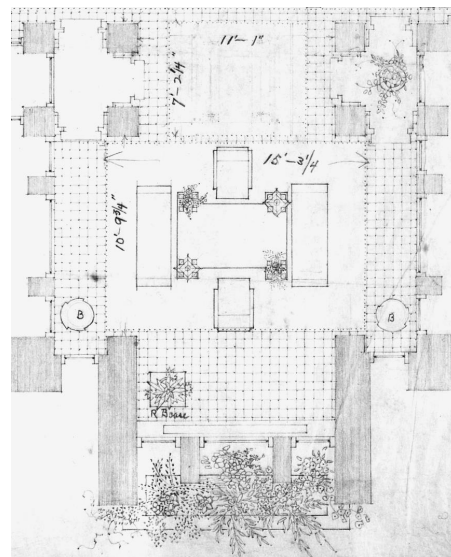
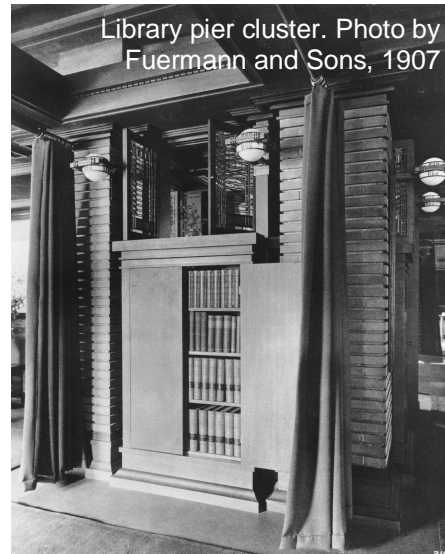
As a reading lounge, the Martin library enjoys some of the best natural lighting in the house; the space received daylight from windows on the east, south and west, making it a viable reading area throughout the day. The addition of two rocking chairs to the east alcove of the room apparently carved-out a "morning room" space for Isabelle Martin and her mother.<sup>40</sup>

Wright's original furnishing scheme for the library, shown in the *tout ensemble* plan, was quite formal: a large, central library table unit including built-in planters and lighting, accompanied by couches and Morris chairs in a symmetrical array.<sup>41</sup> With this architectonic, modular suite of furniture, Wright was clearly trying to delineate the library from the larger unit room space through furnishings, as he had in the dining room. With the addition of the rocking chairs and rearrangement of other furnishings in the room, the Martins made the space a more informal, casual environment.

## Master Bedroom

### Turn-of-the-Century Bedrooms

During the Victorian era and through the Turn-of-the-Century, bedrooms were the most private spaces in the house, much as they are to this day. As rooms devoted entirely to personal, family use, bedrooms and their furnishings were relieved of any need to impress visitors with ostentatious or ceremonial effects. Rather, decorative standards for bedrooms were lighter, more informal and relaxed.



Detail of Library from Wright's *tout ensemble* furnishing plan

Large European houses would typically have separate bedrooms for husband and wife, with dressing rooms for each and, often, an adjoining sitting room for the lady of the house. This custom of gender separation, however, was never widely accepted in America. Thereô as in more modest European housesô husband and wife shared a bedroom, which doubled as a dressing room for the wife; the husband would have a separate dressing space, even if it was essentially a large closet.

Some progressive houses of the Turn-of-the-Century reflect the same general shift in decorative direction as their Victorian predecessors: a shift to more relaxed, light and comfortable furnishings in the private spaces of bedrooms. In the Gamble House, for example, a somewhat different aesthetic governs the bedrooms, as opposed to the semi-public spaces such as the entry hall and living room. The heavy, exotic wood paneling of the ground floor spaces is replaced by canvas-covered plaster and the mahogany furniture by wicker, rattan, and architect-designed pieces of lighter construction and decoration.<sup>42</sup>

Wrightô Prairie house bedrooms vary in terms of how they reflect the public / private criteria of décor described above, and in how they reflect the *gesamtkunstwerk* spirit of Wrightô design philosophy. Some demonstrate less distinction in furnishing aesthetics and materials between public, ground floor spaces and bedrooms (most often found on the second floor, with a few exceptions). The Dana House master bedroom is a prime example of Wrightô comprehensive, integrated approach to interior design. Twin beds flank a small fireplace; in much the same configuration as the twin settles that bracket the fireplace in the reception room, one level below. These bed units are integrated into the space by means of interlacing posts with decorative finials and cross pieces that tie into the frieze rail of the room. Add portieres hung on three sides of the beds, and you have Wrightô abstraction of a traditional four-poster (minus the overhead canopy). These beds are complemented by elaborate, built-in dressing units opposite, with matching armchairs. Nothing is left to chance (or to the clientô whim) in this environment, in keeping with the highly orchestrated spatial qualities of the house as a whole.

In contrast to the Dana House, the Robie House bedrooms, perched in the third-floor ôbelvedereö above the main, living / dining volume of the house, are essentially neutral spaces. Except for a few isolated pieces of Wright-designed furniture, these rooms were filled with a hodge-podge of Victorian and Colonial revival pieces brought in by the Robies and subsequent owners.

### **The Martin House Master Bedroom**

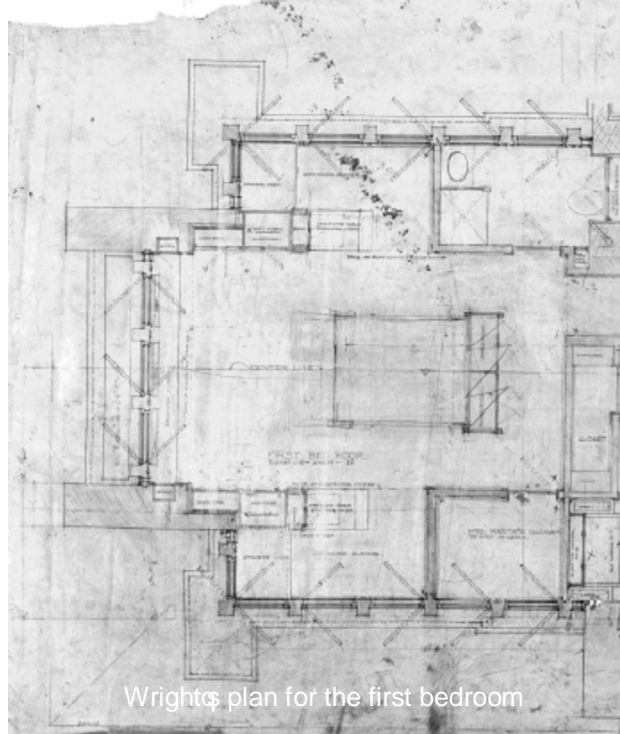
The Martin House has a total of eight bedrooms, all on the second floor. The north-south crossing of the cruciform plan contains four family bedrooms, the first projecting south being the master bedroom. Family anecdotes indicate that the

fourth bedroom on the north end of the north-south wing was Dorothy Martin's, but it is unclear whether the second or third bedroom was occupied by her brother Darwin.<sup>43</sup> The purpose of the remaining bedroom of the family wing is unknown, though it may have been an accommodation for a nanny or for future children.<sup>44</sup> The west projection of the cruciform plan contained guest quarters on the south, the fifth and sixth bedrooms on Wright's plan, and servants' rooms on the north, the seventh and eighth bedrooms.

Like the Dana House master bedroom, the Martin House master bedroom was designed as an almost entirely built-in environment. The Greek cross plan of the room is produced by the re-entrant piers on the south and by the corners of a bathroom and large closet (intended as a walk-in closet or dressing room for Mrs. Martin) on the north.<sup>45</sup>

Two built-in wardrobe / dresser units extended northward from the south re-entrant corners like interior extensions of the piers. These units incorporated two dressing surfaces (each) with drawers beneath, wardrobes with mirrored doors, and small

bookcases with glass doors. Wright added a built-in wardrobe to the middle of the north bay of the room, forming a semi-partition and headboard for the master bed. From this built-in headboard, twin beds extended southward, with an upholstered, bench-top blanket chest serving as the footboard.<sup>46</sup>



As in the Dana master bedroom, the Martin master bed was connected to the trim of the room by virtue of cross pieces that tied-in to the frieze rail. In both master bedrooms, the bed becomes a modular insertion within the larger envelope of the room, although this effect is somewhat diminished in the case of Martin in that the abstracted four-poster concept is limited to the headboard of the bed only.

Darwin Martin recognized the ship-like qualities of the master bedroom design, referring to the 'port' and 'starboard' sides of the space in one letter to Wright.<sup>47</sup> Such nautical motifs may be seen as part of Wright's Prairie house progression to the *dampfer* characterization of the Robie House. These connotations also serve to underscore the generally masculine nature of the room's design, with integrated sleeping berths and stowage units that suggest naval efficiency. A similar interior

can be found in *Lilla Hyttnäs*, the home and studio of Swedish painter Carl Larsson, renovated in the 1890s in a Nordic Arts and Crafts style. Larsson's own bedroom—distinct from his wife's—was a small, utilitarian chamber with a four-poster bed built into the middle of the space. The bed also incorporated storage, a nightstand and a dressing bench: a virtually self-contained bedroom unit.<sup>48</sup>

The Martins were dissatisfied with Wright's radically-integrated design for the Master bedroom furnishings. As proxy for his wife, Darwin Martin made various appeals and suggestions to Wright for changes in the severe design.<sup>49</sup> It afforded virtually no opportunity for Isabelle Martin to make the space more comfortable—a quality that Wright likely would have seen as frivolously feminine. Finally, in something akin to a claustrophobic reaction, Isabelle Martin moved out of the Master bedroom to occupy the sixth bedroom, which had a fireplace, a deep closet, and an adjoining bath. It is unclear exactly when this move occurred, although it seems to have been between 1907 and 1912.<sup>50</sup> In 1912, Cora Herrick (aka "Aunt Polly") was hired as Isabelle's companion, and apparently occupied the fifth bedroom.<sup>51</sup> It stands to reason that Mrs. Martin would have begun sleeping in the sixth bedroom around the time that Ms. Herrick moved in, so that the two were in easy proximity for Herrick to assist Mrs. Martin as needed.<sup>52</sup>

Darwin Martin may have maintained the first bedroom as his own, but he did not tolerate the built-in furnishings for long either. He had the various built-in components removed soon after the family moved into the house, replacing them with more traditional bedroom furnishings.<sup>53</sup>

## Notes—Section IV

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1. The Martins made the first major alteration to the Martin House in 1909, when seven south-facing “Tree of Life” windows from the reception room were sent back to the Linden Glass Company to have the lower squares removed from the design to facilitate better views to the outdoors.
2. Isabelle Martin and her children remained at the Martin House for two more years, but abandoned the property in 1937. See Appendix A (Docent Study Guide), p. 18 and Quinan, *Architecture as Portraiture*, pp. 216–219 for more of this history.
3. Dorothy Martin Foster, interview with Shonnie Finnegan, University Archives, University at Buffalo, 1972 (HFR5018, p. 42).
4. See Martin House Historic Paint report by Robert Furhoff (available from Hamilton Houston Lownie LLC, Restoration Architects).
5. Various anecdotes from interviews with Dorothy Martin Foster and Darwin R. Martin indicate that the reception room was used by the family more often than the living room proper.
6. HFR3064: 208, DDM FLW, letter of 26 August, 1905.
7. As described in an article in *The Buffalo Daily Courier*, 17 November, 1906.
8. Isabelle Martin suffered from a debilitating eye condition commonly identified as “scleritis” inflammation and ulceration of the white part of the eye, causing pain, loss of vision and sensitivity to direct light.
9. I am indebted to Anita Mitchell’s research on Isabelle Martin throughout this section. Mitchell’s research culminates in her article “Belle of Buffalo: The Life and Love of Isabelle Reidpath, Mrs. Darwin Martin,” *Western New York Heritage*, vol. 8 no. 2 (Summer 2005).
10. Depending on the size of this club, their meetings at the Martin House raise the question of seating in the basement space.
11. See Quinan, *Architecture as Portraiture*, p. 189.
12. Augusta Schultz’s employment at the Martin House is based on an anecdotal comment from her nephew, Bill Schultz, documented in 2007.
13. Through interviews with Bill Thorpe and Laurie Thorpe Hatch conducted by MHRC staff (John Courtin and Eric Jackson-Forsberg).
14. The Martins’ greenhouse was a prefabricated structure made by the Pierson-Sefton Company of Jersey City, NJ, shipped on December 24, 1904, and erected in early January, 1905.
15. Harry Hebditch (1904-05) and George Frampton (1905-06) were the first two gardeners for the Martins.
16. Letter currently held in MHRC collection (donated by Thorpe family).

17. According to memo of May 5, 2005 by then Executive Director John C. Courtin. Original source unknown (may be in "Memorandum of Events in the Life of Darwin D. and Isabelle R. Martin")
18. This spatial openness culminated in the fully integrated, prism-like space of the Robie House (1909) living / dining room, although the entry sequence was still orchestrated by the entry hall on the lower floor, beneath the main floor.
19. The transitional Winslow House (River Forest, IL, 1894), Wright's first independent commission, features a generous, formal entry hall with a raised inglenook / reception space on axis. Library and living room flank the hall symmetrically on axis. The entry of the Willits House (Highland Park, IL, 1901), with small reception space to the side, forms one arm of the house's distinct cruciform plan. The Heath House (Buffalo, NY, 1905) has a generous entry hall with overhead lay light and a sunken reception room on axis with the front door.
20. HFR3021, DDM FLW, letter of 19 August, 1904.
21. Ibid.
22. The alignment of piers, doorways and furniture on the western margin of the room suggests a servants' / visitors' corridor with formal seating for waiting individuals along the western wall.
23. In Greene and Greene's Gamble House, a progressive contemporary of the Martin House, a private retreat just off the entry hall was designated "den." This was a home office for David Gamble. Although he was retired at the time the house was built, Gamble called for a personal study and a space where he could receive business associates. See *Gamble House (Architecture in Detail)* by Edward R. Bosley (Phaidon, 2002).
24. DDM FLW, letter of 16 September, 1904. This letter closes with the curious statement, "better not further disclose the purpose of this room."
25. The interpretation that Wright's major Prairie houses are architectural "portraits" of the clients for whom Wright created them is the main thesis of Quinan's *Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House: Architecture as Portraiture*.
26. See, for example, *Miss Parloa's Kitchen Companion* (1887).
27. For a more detailed description of the Gamble House kitchen, see *Gamble House (Architecture in Detail)* by Edward R. Bosley (Phaidon, 2002), "Craftsmanship in the service heart of the house."
28. The kitchens of the other major Prairie houses are less remarkable in terms of integrated fixtures and unique materials such as Novus glass.
29. HFR2008, HFR4016 and HFR4017.
30. As the cruciform or "pinwheel" plans of Wright's Prairie house designs begin to challenge traditional front lot / back lot distinctions, one might begin to speak of dining rooms being "away" from the main entrance of the house.
31. In the Blossom House, Wright's "bootleg" Colonial, such an *exedra* is designated "conservatory" on the drawing. Note that in the Martin House complex, the pergola / conservatory array springs from a point at the northwest corner of the dining room.

Here, the vestigial conservatory is revived to become a distinct (though still attached) building.

32. For example, Stickley's interiors illustrated in *The Craftsman*, or various interiors rendered by C. R. Mackintosh or C. F. A. Voysey.
33. The dining room table corner stanchions were only semi-affixed to the table top (apparently by a system of holes that received dowels), and removed by the Martins soon after they were received, as evidenced by the 1907 Fuermann photograph.
34. "Bootleg" houses refer to a number of houses Wright designed in secret, while employed by Adler and Sullivan (i.e. the George Blossom House, 1892, the Thomas H. Gale House, 1892, and the Walter M. Gale House, 1893)
35. Letter, FLW to DDM, 17 August, 1904.
36. Note that on the Wasmuth plan for the Barton House, Wright varies the designation of spaces, labeling the small, connecting space at the center of the cruciform plan as living room (*Wohnzimmer*) and the eastern wing of the plan obviously the main living space with the fireplace as "books" (*Bücherei*). Thus, Wright tries to assert the concepts of living room *and* library into as modest a Prairie house as the Barton House.
37. Note that in the precedent of the Barton House plan (1903), the central space of the "unit" room is a stair hall which may be seen as "wasted" space in terms of traditional applications of furnishings.
38. Bill Thorpe, brother of chauffeur William Thorpe, interviewed by John Courtin, August, 2004.
39. In many libraries of neo-gothic mansions of the latter nineteenth century, gothic detailing in woodwork and stained glass windows referenced the monastic scriptoria of the late Middle Ages (which also had large central tables with good light).
40. Isabelle's mother, Katherine Reidpath, did not reside at the Martin House, but was a frequent caller and may have had her own special chair.
41. Wright's drawing suggests that the table, couches and Morris chairs were meant to function as an integrated, modular unit incorporating the essential elements of seating, lighting and work surface for the library. See also Section III.
42. See Bosley, *Gamble House (Architecture in Detail)*.
43. Dorothy Martin refers to the north wall of *her* bedroom being modified, indicating the fourth bedroom (HFR5018, interview with Dorothy Martin Foster, p. 34). Also, a July 1920 entry in Darwin Martin's diary indicates that Isabelle was convalescing in Dorothy's room in order to benefit from cooled air coming in north windows over the pergola roof, which had been sprayed with water. The bathroom adjacent to the fourth bedroom also might have made it more desirable as a girl's bedroom.
44. Darwin R. Martin was only five years old when the family occupied the house, so a nanny may have been in order, although there is no mention of such a staff member in any known source. A nanny / nursery arrangement for the second and third bedrooms would also have prescribed an adjoining door in the east / west partition wall between the rooms, but none exists. It is not known whether the Martins

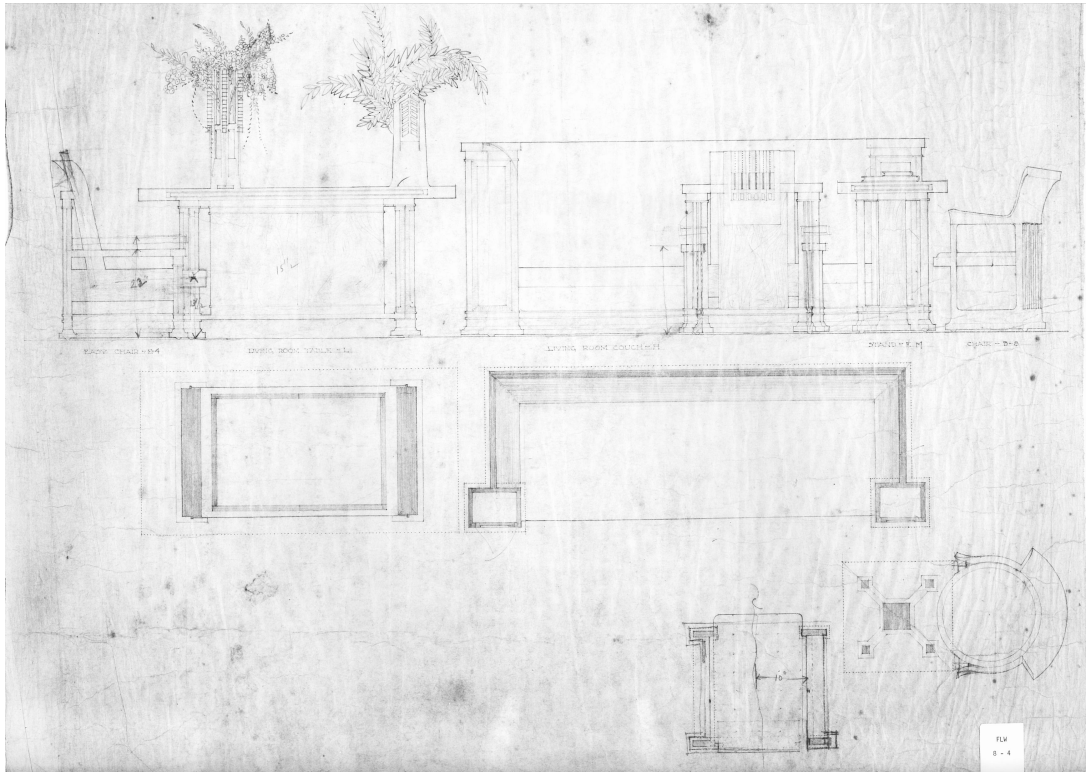


desired to have any more children, but they may have planned for the possibility. Another possibility is that the second and third bedrooms were the children's rooms, and the fourth bedroom served as their playroom (perhaps until Dorothy was older and moved into the fourth bedroom). The unusual cork flooring in the fourth bedroom suggests this possibility.

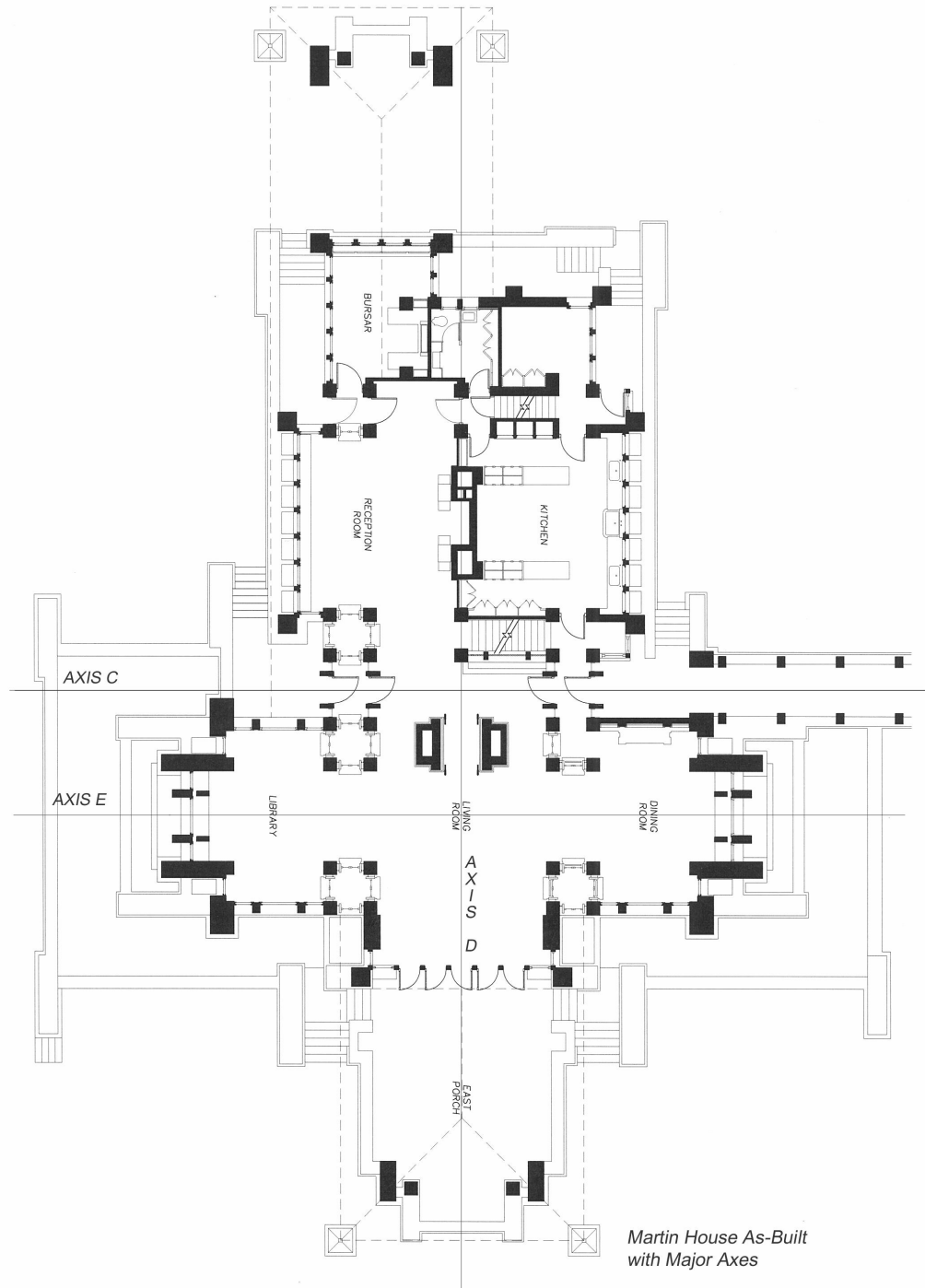
45. The closets and built-in furnishing elements of the Master bedroom as-built were modified considerably from what was indicated on the original construction drawing for the second floor. The O'Neil Historical Report chronicles the struggle between Isabelle Martin and Wright over the configuration of storage and furnishings in the space, suggesting that Wright exacted his revenge on the Martins by over-crowding the room with an intruding closet and ill-conceived built-in elements that blocked views and movement through the space (see Appendix C of volume I, p. 62).
46. The twin beds, adjacent to one another as to form a larger bed in two parts, were not technically built-in, in that they were not attached to the wardrobe / headboard unit by means of any hardware. The beds had to be movable in order to make them. They did, however, fit snugly around the south elevation of the wardrobe / headboard unit.
47. Letter, DDM to FLW, 24 March, 1906.
48. Larsson's own painting depicting his bedroom, *Papa's Bedroom* (1894), features the central bed unit, and shows Larson shaving in the far corner of the room. His tall black boots are at the ready next to the dressing bench on one side of the bed. Such a sense of utility and readiness in a man's bedroom can even be traced back to Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, where Jefferson's bed is built into an alcove that opens on both sides, connecting to his bedroom on one side and his cabinet on the other.
49. Martin makes such an appeal to Wright on at least two occasions, a year apart, in letters of March, 1905 and March, 1906. There is no direct, documented response or resolution of the issue from Wright.
50. It is not known whether there were any marital factors motivating Isabelle's move, but it is interesting in its apparent rejection of Wright's attempt to impose more progressive and middle class sleeping arrangements on the couple. Note that the Martins also maintained separate bedrooms—relatively far apart—in Graycliff, their summer home built in 1927.
51. Unique among all the spaces in the house, the fifth and sixth bedrooms were originally trimmed in mahogany, rather than oak or cypress. At Darwin Martin's request, Wright made this accommodation in millwork to match a mahogany bedroom suite that the Martins desired to maintain from their previous residence.
52. Mrs. Martin's need for a companion close at hand was precipitated by her debilitating eye condition and frequent illnesses.
53. As stated in the O'Neil Historical Report. O'Neil's source for this information is not documented, although Dorothy Martin comments on the general removal of built-in elements from the master bedroom.

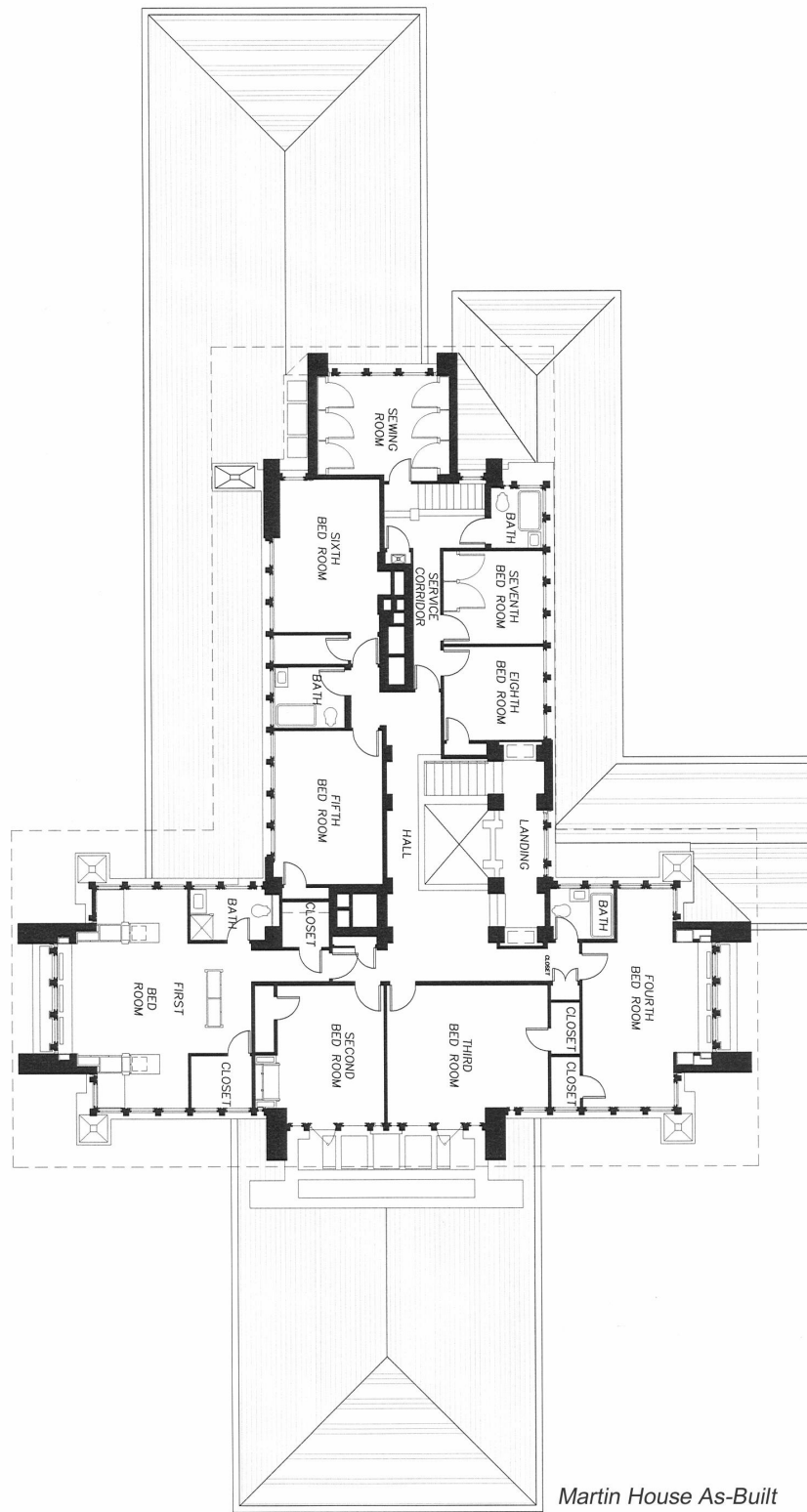


## V. FURNISHINGS PLAN



*Wright's presentation drawing for the Martin House living room furniture*





Martin House As-Built  
Second Floor

## A. INTRODUCTION

Due to the previously noted differences between Wright's *tout ensemble* furnishings plan, the series of photos by Fuermann and Sons (1907) and other evidence pertaining to the Martins' eventual furnishing of the house, the plan that follows is necessarily a composite of various— at times conflicting— research, and an attempt to reconcile such differences. Every attempt has been made to make these plans reflect the best evidence of how the various spaces in the Martin House would have been furnished, circa 1907. In some cases this is a triangulation of evidence from various sources.

The year of significance for restoration of the Martin House complex (1907) does provide a general context to guide the inclusion or omission of pieces. It begs to be broader, however, given certain pieces that are compelling for their biographical significance, but were added after 1907 (see Section II C).

Adherence to 1907 as a comprehensive year of significance for full restoration of the complex— with all interior elements, including furnishings— may be problematic also in the sense that the audience tends to accept the Fuermann photos of 1907 as absolute reflections of reality. It is widely held that the Fuermanns, under Wright's personal direction, would freely reposition furniture for interior photos in order to set up the best, most flattering shot. The most obvious evidence of this in the Martin House interior photos that Fuermann took for the 1908 *Architectural Record* is various planters and flower arrangements that migrate from one shot to another. It is entirely plausible that Wright and Fuermann rearranged furniture in the same manner— especially smaller, portable pieces such as the barrel chairs. Moreover, the fact that certain views show barrel chairs from different angles (see, for example, the living room photo HFR2003) suggests a deliberate attempt to show off this favorite design of Wright's in the course of documenting his design for the Martin House.

Wright's *tout ensemble* drawing is hardly a more reliable guide for formulating a comprehensive furnishings plan for the Martin House. As discussed in Sections III and IV C, many additions and alterations were made to this preliminary, presentation drawing— changes apparently driven by both practical and aesthetic considerations. One need only consider the reception room in the *tout ensemble* drawing for an illustration of this sketchiness: one barrel chair floats nearly in the middle of the room, its back to the pillar back chair to the west, and awkwardly facing the spinwheel arrangement of chairs around the table to the east. Its position suggests an unfinished thought on Wright's part, or perhaps a piece that is left out large in the room. Some such pieces— especially the barrel chairs and plant stands— may continue to be considered out large in furnishing the Martin House.

The overarching mandate to make the furnished Martin House as ADA compliant as possible may necessitate the re-arrangement or omission of certain pieces currently shown on the plans. For example, the narrow aisle created by the end of the reception room sofa and northern pillar back chair may have to be widened, given that wheelchair access to the house will be via a lift at the Bursar's office entrance, and the visitor will have to proceed through the reception room from there.

### **Notes on Room-by-room Inventories and Plans**

øHFRö numbers refer to drawings, photographs, documents and collection objects catalogued in Volume I.

Certain drawings not included in Volume I are referenced by their original accession numbers (i.e. Frank Lloyd Wright Archives numbers such as 0405.005).

The nomenclature of furnishing items is consistent with that of previous cataloguing efforts by the University at Buffalo and NY State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. In some cases these names are popular terms given pieces not described by Wright or the Martins.

Built-in components are included in the inventory in the interest of providing a comprehensive overview of furnishings, both moveable and fixed.

The scale and location of most pieces shown is approximate. Logical adjustments as to location may be made during implementation.

## B. INVENTORIES OF RECOMMENDED FURNISHINGS / ROOM PLANS

### Abbreviations for Objects on Room Plans

BC	Barrel chair
BK	Bookcase
CT	Compound table
DC	Desk chair
DN	Dining chair
DT	Dining Table
EC	Easy chair
ES	Encyclopedia stand
FB	Firewood box
FL	Floor lamp
FS	Footstool
KS	Kitchen stool
LT	Library table
MC	Morris chair
OC	Office chair
PB	Piano bench
PC	Pillar-back chair
PL	Planter
PN	Piano
PS	Plant stand
RC	Rocking chair
SC	Side chair
SF	Sofa
TB	Table
TL	Table lamp
TT	Tea table
V	Vase
VT	Victrola



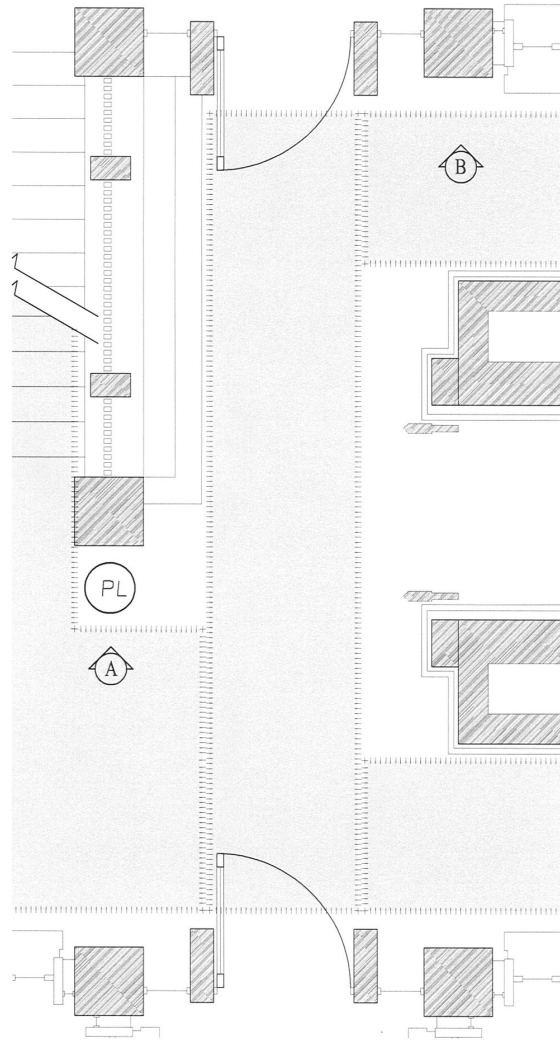
## Entry Hall

As a passageway along Axis 6C of Wright's plan for the complex, from the Martin House front door to the long vista of the pergola, this space has no major, freestanding furnishings. The location of the *ukiyo-e* prints might have been prescribed by Wright, but the planters may well have been transient, moving from room to room with some frequency. They might, for that matter, have been props placed by Wright or Fuermann for the sake of the photograph's composition.

Object / Location	Evidence	Recommendations
Carpet / placed per carpet plan (HFR4042)	HFR2004 HFR3073 HFR3157, 3158, 3159 HFR4042 (location and dimensions)	Reproduce, per textiles conservator's report of August, 2006.
Print / on pier, to east of inner door	HFR2002 HFR2004	Produce <i>giclée</i> reproduction from HFR1095 (DM.2003.99.A.B.), frame and hang
Print / on pier, to east of stairs at bottom	HFR2001 HFR2004	May be a print from collection, but photographic evidence unclear. Obtain similar <i>ukiyo-e</i> print as replacement and hang in same location
Jardinière / on frieze rail, west side of stairway screen	HFR2002 HFR2004	Acquire period piece or reproduction
Planter, basket / on floor, in front of east pier at bottom of stairs	HFR2001 HFR2004	Acquire reproduction
Plant (fern) / on east newel post, stairway landing	HFR2002	Acquire replacement (artificial)
Andirons / double-sided fireplace	HFR2001 HFR2004 HFR4009 HFR4010 HFR4019	Reproduced and installed, 2008
Portiere / inside south door, beneath stairway landing	HFR2002 HFR2004 HFR3083 HFR3084 HFR3110 HFR3114	Reproduce; see HFR2005 for construction details. Fiber and color to be determined through further research.

## Entry Hall Plan

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ENTRY HALL PLAN  
1/4" = 1'-0"



## Entry Hall Elevations

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A



B

ENTRY HALL ELEVATIONS  
 $1/4" = 1'-0"$

## Reception Room

Furnishings in the reception room depart from Wright's plan, reflecting the Martins' use of the space as their preferred living room. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Martins used this room as their primary sitting room, adding two overstuffed easy chairs, a high-backed sofa which formed a sort of half-inglenook on the flank of the fireplace and a passage for servant traffic behind, and a Stickley tea table and chairs grouped in front of this sofa.

Due to the necessity of moving tour groups through the space, it may be necessary to omit one of the pillar back chairs (at the northeast pier of pier cluster G). Experimentation with placement of the sofa will determine whether there is adequate passage between it and the chair.

The Fuermann photograph identifies many of the furnishings in the space, but the angle of the camera is such that the entire western half of the room is not shown. Thus, the best evidence of furnishings in this half of the room is Wright's furnishing plan taken in concert with existing pieces in the collection.

The formal configuration of table and two chairs on the West wall may be interpreted as a waiting area for visitors who entered through the bursar's office entrance (those doing business with the service staff or with Darwin Martin in his home office).

Anecdotal evidence from interviews with the Martin children indicates that the various plant stands were moved throughout the first floor of the house with some frequency, to display fresh-cut flower arrangements. The plant stands specified for the reception room are per Wright's plan and those shown in HFR2001. The two different heights of box-base stands logically correspond to their placement on either side of the fireplace and at the south elevation windows, respectively.

The Wright-designed tall case clock presents an interesting situation. Wright intended position for the clock against the plaster panel immediately to the east of the fireplace mass is clearly indicated on the *tout ensemble* furnishings plan. However, the presence of one of the Japanese prints and a sconce installed on this panel (clearly visible in the Fuermann photo, HFR2001) would seem to preclude this as the ultimate location of the clock. The clock does not appear in any photographic evidence until the 1930s, when it is shown on the west end of the main stairway landing in Edgar Tafel's account of Wright's visit to Buffalo in *Apprentice to Genius* (p. 87). Discussion of design and fabrication of the clock in the Wright / Martin correspondence through 1908 documents problems, including a modification to the height of the piece (see letters HFR3144-3147); it is plausible that the height discrepancy and eventual modification was related to the change in location, from Reception room to stairway landing.

Object / Location	Evidence	Recommendations
Carpet / placed per carpet plan (HFR4042)	HFR2001 HFR3073 HFR3157, 3158, 3159 HFR4042 (location and dimensions)	Reproduce, per textiles conservator's report of August, 2006.
Table, compound (circle-in-square) / southeast corner, aligned with pier clusters	HFR2001 HFR3049 HFR3065 HFR3067 HFR4032	Use HFR1052 (DM.2003.37); conserve as needed
Chair, barrel / west side of compound table, facing north	HFR2001 HFR3049 HFR4032 HFR4035	Use HFR1025 (DM.2003.46); chair was reupholstered in September, 2006; wood may require further conservation
Chair, side (öslipperö) / facing south side of compound table, angled toward the northwest	HFR2001 HFR3049 HFR4032	Use HFR1006 (DM.2003.6.1); chair was reupholstered in September, 2006; wood may require further conservation
Chair, easy / east side of compound table, facing north	HFR2001 HFR2022	Use HFR1029 (DM.2003.53.A.B) or HFR1030 (DM.2003.54.A.B ; conserve frame, reupholster with material used for slipcover produced in September, 2006
Table, tea / west side of fireplace, in front of sofa	HFR2001	Use HFR1041 (DM.2003.24); conserve as needed
Tea service / on tea table	HFR2001	Acquire similar period pieces or reproductions of teapot, cups and saucers, etc.
Sofa / west of western firewood box, extending southward into room	HFR2001 HFR4008	Use1034 (DM.2003.34); conserve frame and reupholster per available upholstery evidence
Chair, barrel / south side of tea table, facing north	HFR2001 HFR3049 HFR4032 HFR4035	Use HFR1026 (loan from the Albright-Knox Art Gallery); chair was reupholstered in September, 2006; wood may require further conservation

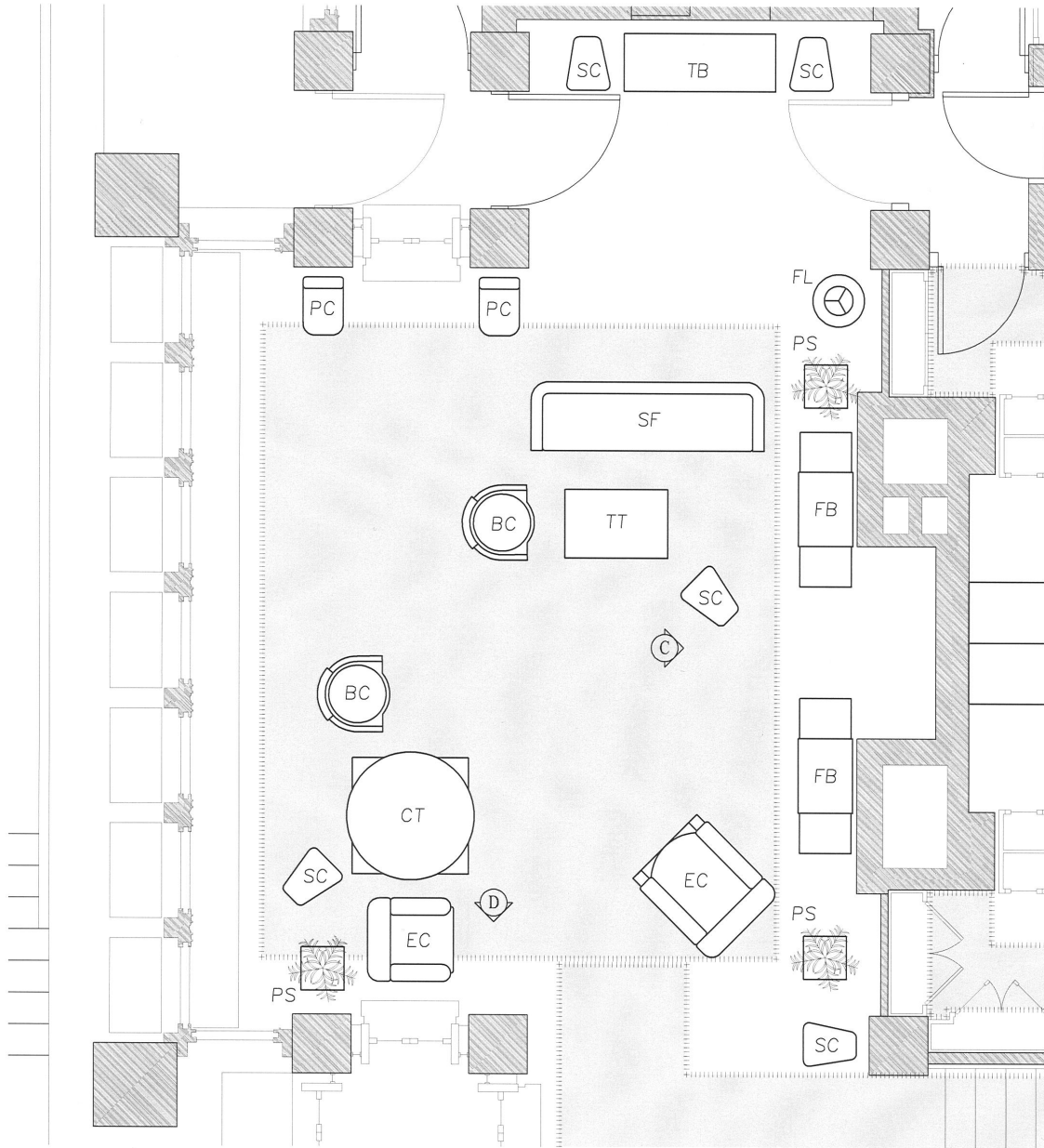
Chair, side (öslipperö) / facing east side of tea table, angled toward the southwest	HFR2001 HFR3049 HFR4032	Use HFR1007 (DM.2003.6.2); chair needs to be reupholstered, per others done in September, 2006; wood may require further conservation
Lamp, floor (Tiffany) / behind sofa, next to plant stand	HFR1104 HFR2024 (not for placement)	Acquire (original or reproduction) lamp similar to one from HFR1104 group: five-legged base with domed glass shade. Original was lost to theft in 1979.
Chair, pillar back / against southeast pier of pier cluster G	HFR3049 HFR4032 HFR4006	Use HFR1013 (DM.2003.7.1.A.B); chair was reupholstered in September, 2006; wood may require further conservation
Chair, pillar back / against northeast pier of pier cluster G  <b>This chair may be omitted due to tour flow around south end of sofa; measure for ADA compliance.</b>	HFR3049 HFR4032 HFR4006	Use HFR1014 (DM.2003.7.1.A.B); chair was reupholstered in September, 2006; wood may require further conservation
Chair, side (öslipperö) / on wall between reception room and bursar's office, flanking double öxö base table on north	HFR3049 HFR4032	Use HFR1008 (DM.2003.6.A.B); chair was reupholstered in September, 2006; wood may require further conservation
Chair, side (öslipperö) / on wall between reception room and bursar's office, flanking double öxö base table on south	HFR3049 HFR4032	Use HFR1009 (DM.2003.6.4.A.B); chair was reupholstered in September, 2006; wood may require further conservation
Table, double öxö base / on wall between reception room and bursar's office, between öslipperö chairs	HFR4032	Use HFR1043 (DM.2003.42); conserve as needed
Stand, plant (tall öxö base) / against wall panel to west of fireplace	HFR4032	Use HFR1045 (DM.2003.25); conserve as needed
Stand, plant (tall öxö base) / against wall panel to east of fireplace	HFR2001 HFR4032	Use HFR1046 (DM.2003.18); conserve as needed
Stand, plant (short öxö base) / southwest corner of pier cluster A	HFR4032 HFR4035	Use HFR1040 (DM.2003.17); conserve as needed
Box, firewood / against fireplace surround, west side	HFR2001 HFR3101 HFR3102 HFR4024	Use HFR1100 (DM.2003.36.1); conserve as needed

Box, firewood / against fireplace surround, east side	HFR2001 HFR3101 HFR3102 HFR4024	Use HFR1101 (DM.2003.36.2); conserve as needed
Chair, easy / northeast corner, angled toward southwest	HFR2001	Use HFR1028 (DM.2003.52); conserve frame and reupholster per available upholstery evidence
Print / on wall panel to west of fireplace	HFR2019	Use existing <i>giclée</i> reproduction of HFR1085 (DM.2003.89.A.B)
Print / on fireplace surround, west side	HFR2019	May be later additions to initial group of prints; if included, use <i>original</i> of HFR1080 (DM.2003.102.A.B) as sole example of original print
Print / on fireplace surround, east side		May be later additions to initial group of prints; if included, use existing <i>giclée</i> reproduction of HFR1082 (DM.2003.110.A.B)
Print / on wall panel to east of fireplace	HFR2001	Use existing <i>giclée</i> reproduction of HFR1084 (DM.2003.88.A.B)
Print / on northwest pier of pier cluster A, facing west	HFR2001	Produce <i>giclée</i> reproduction of HFR1086 (DM.2003.90.A.B) (to be re-printed due to poor reproduction quality, per Marie Culver)
Vase, glass / on tall õxö base plant stand, to east of fireplace	HFR2001	Acquire period piece or reproduction
Flowers / in glass vase	HFR2001	Use artificial flowers
Miscellaneous decorative objects: shallow bowl, small vase, letter opener, small books, framed photo / on circle-in-square table	HFR2001	Acquire period pieces or reproductions
Plant (fern) / on short õxö base plant stand		Acquire replacement (artificial)
Statuette, <i>Mercury</i> / on shelf of pier cluster A, facing west	HFR2001 HFR3083 HFR3084 HFR3110 HFR3114	Acquire period piece or reproduction
Portiere / across eastern doorway, west of stairway	HFR2001 HFR3083 HFR3084	Reproduce; see HFR2005 for construction details. Fiber and color to be determined through

	HFR3110 HFR3114 HFR5018, p. 51	further research.
Clock, tall case / <i>on main stair landing, north wall of west side alcove (top of first flight of stairs, on axis)</i>	HFR3144 HFR3145 HFR3146 HFR3147 HFR4032	Use HFR1065 (DM.2003.50.A)



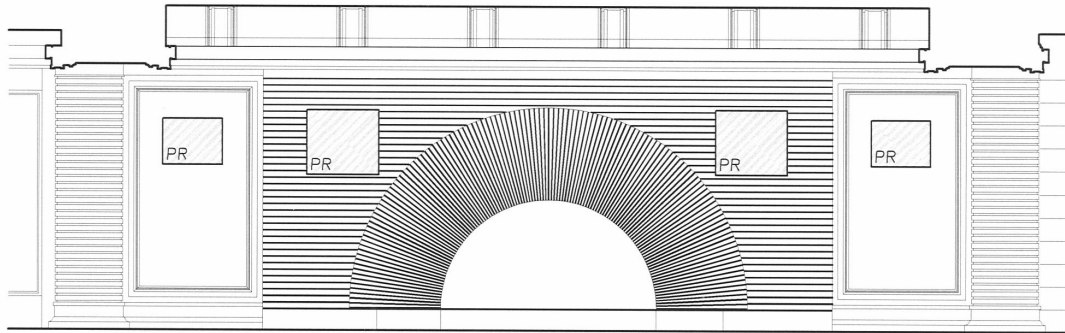
## Reception Room Plan



RECEPTION ROOM PLAN  
1/4" = 1'-0"



## Reception Room Elevations



C



D

RECEPTION ROOM ELEVATIONS  
1/4" = 1'-0"

## Bursar's Office

With no photographic evidence and no furnishings indicated on Wright's furnishing plan (this space is not included formally on the drawing, but only sketched-in in the upper left corner), the only indication of furnishings in the Bursar's office is from Wright's various drawings for the built-in desk units, secretary and cabinets. These built-ins will be reproduced during Phase V of restoration, per the restoration architect's specifications, based on original drawings.

There is a good deal of discussion in the letters for lighting of the desk alcove, but the resolution of the issue is unclear. The desk lamp (HFR1103) seems a likely possibility for such an application, although it is shown on the library table in HFR2013 and HFR2016. The desk alcove does include a built-in skylight / lay light directly overhead that would have provided some degree of lighting in this space.

Mr. Martin must have had a desk chair in the room, but it is unknown whether any of the chairs in the collection were used for this purpose (or whether this desk chair is lost).

The possibility that Darwin Martin used the bursar's office to receive business associates and conduct various business matters suggests that there may have been at least one chair in the space for visitors. The proposed barrel chair is one possibility for this application, though one could argue for a more utilitarian chair for office visitors.

The office equipment and personal effects recommended for the desk units reflect Darwin Martin's professional identity as Chief Financial Officer of the Larkin Company, his fastidious, detail-oriented work habits and the use of the office to conduct various adjunct business pursuits.

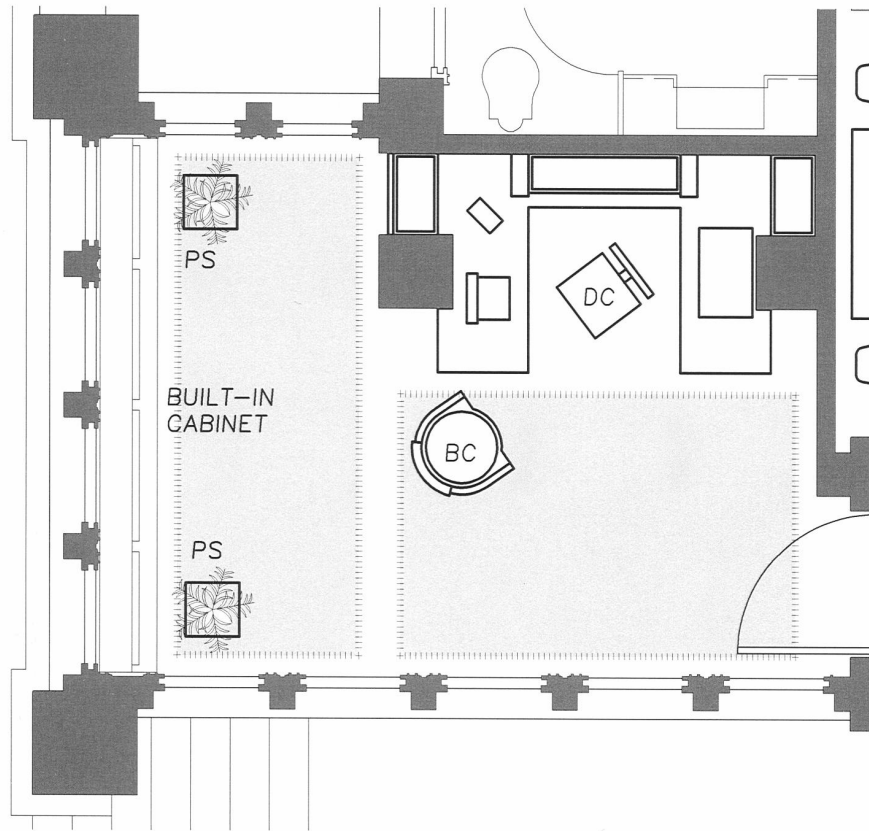
The placement of the plant stands on the west end of the office is purely speculative, representing one possible location for these pieces that likely were relocated with some frequency. Ferns or cut flower arrangements are recommended for this location, due to the low light conditions.

Object / Location	Evidence	Recommendations
Desk Secretary cabinet unit	HFR4013 HFR4014 HFR4015	<i>As this is a built-in component, its construction will be specified by the architects and included in Phase V—Martin House interior restoration</i>
Chair, desk / in desk alcove		Reproduce, per further research
Chair, barrel / South end of west desk		Reproduce from HFR1025

unit, angled toward northeast		(DM.2003.46)
Desk set: blotter, letter holder, rocker blotter, pen tray and letter opener / centered on east desk unit	HFR5012	Use HFR1125 and HFR11266 Heintz Art Metal desk blotter and accessories. Conserve as needed.
Papers / on both desk units		Use facsimiles of Larkin Company paperwork, c. 1907, and/or facsimiles of Martin / Wright correspondence
Photograph, framed / on east desk unit		A framed print of a historic family photo— such as HFR2022 or HFR20236— would be an appropriate personal item next to the desk set.
Books, reference / on east desk surface		Common reference books of the period, such as a small dictionary and thesaurus, would make a logical addition to the furnishing of Martin's work area
Typewriter / against pier, center of west desk unit	Martin's Memorandum book mentions his acquisition of a typewriter. Also, numerous typewritten letters between Martin and Wright indicate presence of typewriter.	Acquire c. 1900 typewriter or reproduction.
Adding machine / west desk unit, right of typewriter	Martin's accounting profession and various side business ventures suggest the need for an adding machine	Acquire c. 1900 adding machine or reproduction.
Stand, plant / in northwest corner		Use HFR1049 (DM.2003.29)
Stand, plant / in southwest corner		Use HFR1050 (DM.2003.30)
Plant (fern) / on northwest plant stand		Acquire replacement (artificial)
Plant (fern) / on southwest plant stand		Acquire replacement (artificial)

**Bursar's Office Plan**

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BURSAR'S OFFICE PLAN  
1/4" = 1'-0"



## Kitchen

Like the bursar's office, the kitchen is furnished with built-in cabinetry. Appliances, iceboxes, cabinets of various configurations, countertops and sinks are all detailed in Wright's original drawings and specifications for this space. As in the bursar's office, these built-ins will be reproduced during Phase V of restoration, per the restoration architect's drawings and specifications (based on Wright's original drawings).

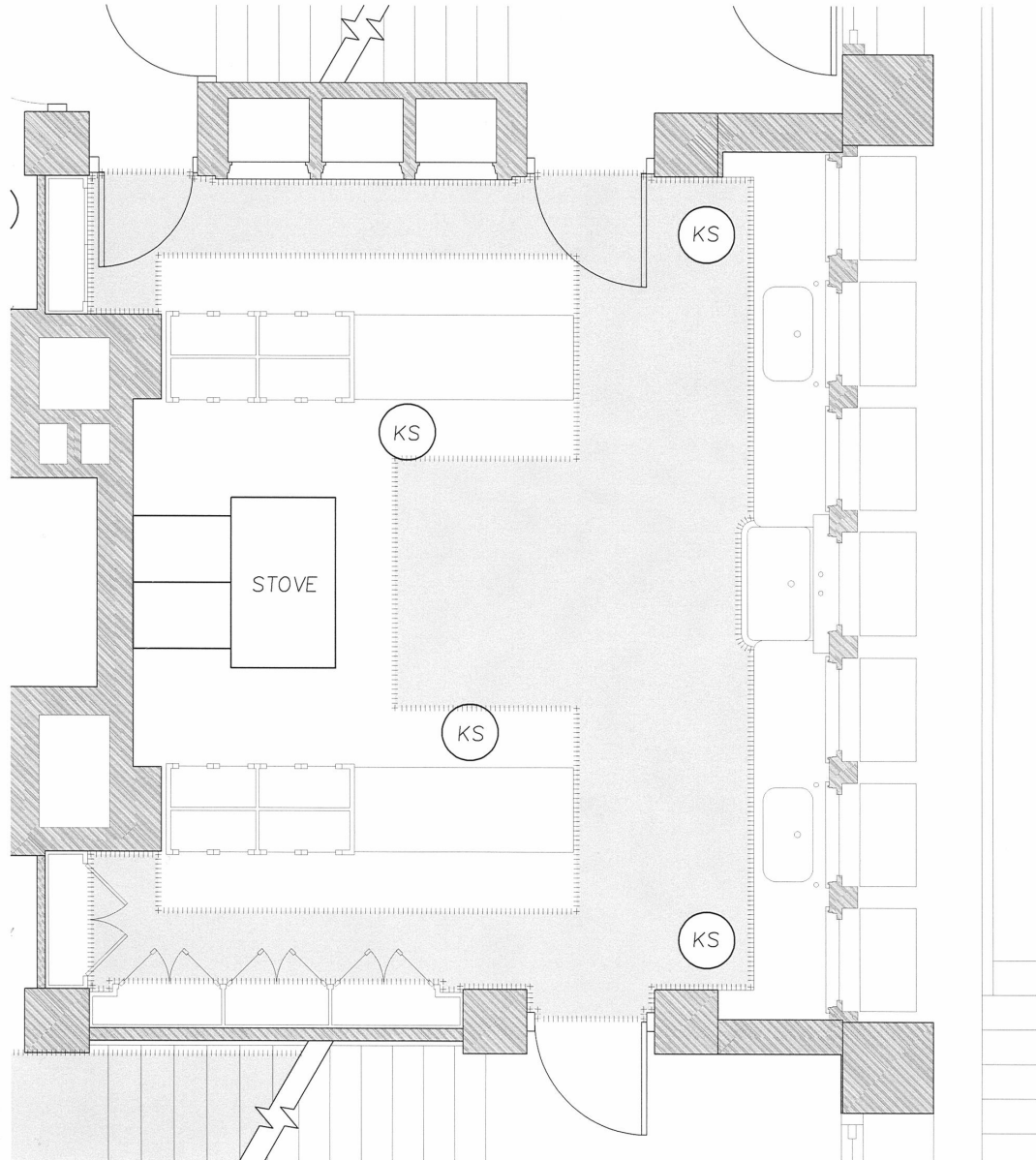
There is no evidence of other, freestanding furnishings such as chairs or stools. However, it is plausible that there were stools in the space for the use of the staff who worked there. Fuermann may have moved them out of the photo (HFR2008) in order to emphasize the clean lines and antiseptic appearance of Wright's progressive kitchen fixtures. This institutional aspect may be mitigated by the inclusion of the stools and a few carefully chosen prop items, suggested below.

Object / Location	Evidence	Recommendations
Cabinetry, countertops and appliances	HFR2008 HFR4016 HFR4017	<i>As these are built-in components, their construction will be specified by the architects and included in Phase V—Martin House interior restoration. Various pieces of kitchen cabinetry currently held by NYSOPRHP will be restored and reinstalled in Phase V.</i>
Carpet / Mats	HFR2008	Reproduce, per further research by textiles conservators or consultants
Stool, kitchen / northeast corner, adjacent to counter		Use period-appropriate reproduction—oak, with round seat
Stool, kitchen / northwest corner, adjacent to counter		Use period-appropriate reproduction—oak, with round seat
Stool, kitchen / east side of west counter peninsula		Use period-appropriate reproduction—oak, with round seat
Stool, kitchen / west side of east counter peninsula		Use period-appropriate reproduction—oak, with round seat
Kitchen accessories / north bank of	HFR2008	Use reproduction pots, scrubbers,

countertops and sinks		dish towels and etc. to detail this area
Kitchen accessories / west counter peninsula (öCooks tableö)		Use reproduction cutting boards, knives, other utensils and small appliances (early electric appliances)
Kitchen accessories / east counter peninsula (öService tableö)		Use reproduction cutting boards, knives, other utensils and small appliances (early electric appliances)

## Kitchen Plan

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KITCHEN PLAN  
1/4" = 1'-0"





## Unit Room

### Dining Room

The available photographic and textual evidence indicates that the arrangement of furnishings in the dining room follow Wright's original furnishing plan more closely than in any other room in the house. The room is anchored by the built-in sideboard (client proof, in Wright's parlance) and suite of dining table and chairs.

The fate of the original dining table is unknown—no portion of it remains in the collection, except one of the corner stanchions, which has been reconstructed from the existing, lower wood structure. Another such stanchion fragment remains in the collection, but it is unknown whether it represents a portion of a dining table stanchion, or its counterpart from the original design for the library table (*for more detailed analysis of the extant library table, see Appendix B.*) Thus, the dining table must be completely reproduced, including three reproduction stanchions, based on the available evidence (photographs and drawings).

The suite of table and chairs was the result of a long design process of give-and-take between Wright and the Martins. Two areas were contentious: the chair design, and the elaborate corner stanchions for the table. The chairs, as built, are more conventional, four-legged spindle back chairs, rather than the radical, three-legged chairs with cantilevered seats originally proposed by Wright and documented in the Wright-Martin correspondence (also see HFR4033). The stanchions—planter / light units—were built as designed, but removed from the table by the Martins within a year after delivery, as they interfered with service and conversation at the table. We recommend that the four stanchions (one reconstructed and three reproductions) be included on the reproduction table, as they were clearly an important, built component of Wright's original design for the table and definitive elements for the dining room space in general.

The recommendation for placement of the dining chairs is based on the Fuermann photographs (1907), but ultimately, the position of these chairs should be considered variable within the space. The table may have been expandable with leaves to accommodate eight chairs.

The only extant portion of the sideboard is the central, chest of drawers section, which is in poor condition. One pair of art glass doors from the side section is in the collection of the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum, Winter Park, Florida. A conservation / reconstruction assessment will have to be made to determine the desirability of reconstructing the sideboard around the existing fragment, or creating a reproduction from new material.

Placement of a set of encyclopedia in the pier cluster bookcase specified is based on anecdotal evidence from the Martin children and grandchildren. Wright designed a

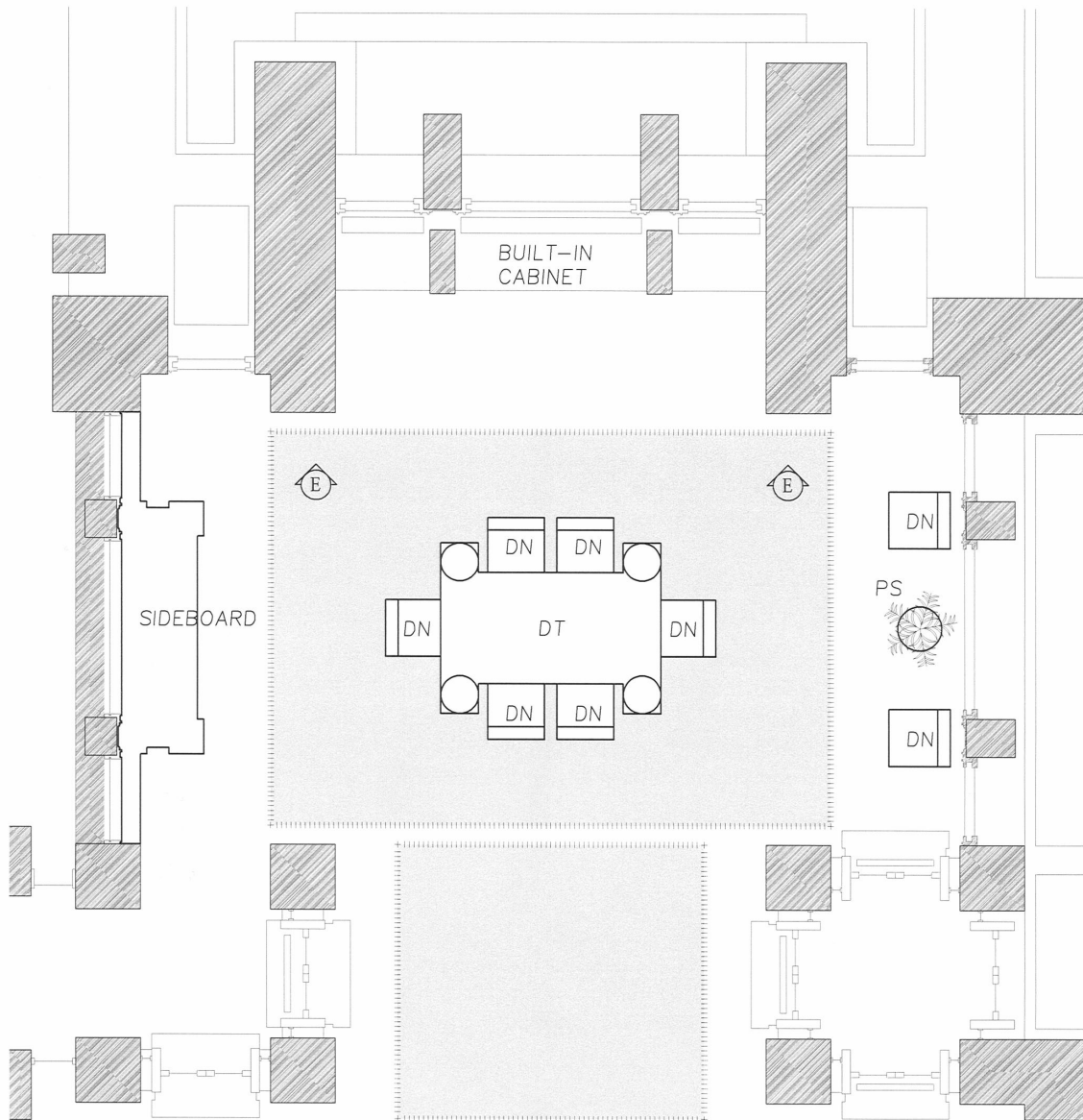
custom encyclopedia stand for Martin's set of Encyclopedia Britannica, which was in the library, but Dorothy Martin Foster recalled that there was an additional set of encyclopedia in the dining room. Granddaughter Margaret Foster believes that the dining room set was kept in the pier cluster bookcase facing north in the southeast corner of the dining room.

<b>Object / Location</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
Carpet / placed per carpet plan (HFR4042)	HFR2006 HFR3073 HFR3157, 3158, 3159 HFR4042 (location and dimensions)	Reproduce, per textiles conservator's report of August, 2006.
Table, dining (including stanchions) / centered on carpet, long side runs east-west	HFR 4032 HFR 2006	Reproduce, per available evidence from drawings, photographs and documents
Bowl / center of dining table	HFR2006	One of a set of Heintz Art Metal vessels HFR11236 might make an appropriate replacement for this centerpiece
Flowers / in centerpiece bowl	HFR2006	Use artificial flowers
Doily / under centerpiece bowl	HFR2006	Use a piece of Martin family linen, from collection donated by Margaret Foster, 2007
Chair, dining / at table, north side	HFR2006 HFR4032 HFR3049 and other letters	Use HFR1001 (DM.2003.15.1.A.B); Conserve and reupholster
Chair, dining / at table, north side	HFR2006 HFR4032 HFR3049 and other letters	Use HFR1002 (DM.2003.15.2.A.B); Conserve and reupholster
Chair, dining / at table, south side	HFR2006 HFR4032 HFR3049 and other letters	Use HFR1003 (DM.2003.15.3.A.B); Conserve and reupholster
Chair, dining / at table, south side	HFR2006 HFR4032 HFR3049 and other letters	Use HFR1004 (DM.2003.15.4.A.B); Conserve and reupholster
Chair, dining / at table, east side	HFR2006 HFR4032 HFR3049 and other letters	Use HFR1005.1 Borrow from owner (Daniel Wolf, New York City) or reproduce from examples in collection

Chair, dining / at table, west side	HFR2006 HFR4032 HFR3049 and other letters	Use HFR1005.2 Borrow from owner (Daniel Wolf, New York City) or reproduce from examples in collection
Chair, dining / against windows, east wall, north of plant stand	HFR2006 HFR4032 HFR3049 and other letters	Use HFR1005.3 Borrow from owner (Daniel Wolf, New York City) or reproduce from examples in collection
Chair, dining / against windows, east wall, south of plant stand	HFR2006 HFR4032 HFR3049 and other letters	Use HFR1005.3 Borrow from owner (Daniel Wolf, New York City) or reproduce from examples in collection
Sideboard, body & drawers Built-into west wall	HFR2006 HFR4018 HFR4020 HFR4032	<b><i>As this is a built-in component, its construction will be included in Phase V—Martin House interior restoration</i></b> Reconstruct from extant components <sup>6</sup> HFR1060 (DM.2003.45.B-K), 1061 (DM.2003.48.A) <sup>6</sup> or reproduce; one pair art glass doors at Charles Hosmer Morse Museum, Winter Park, FL
Serving pieces / on top of sideboard	HFR2006	A china tureen, teapot, double-handled metal vase and other small vessels are shown in HFR2006; acquire period pieces or reproductions
Stand, plant / between dining chairs against east windows	HFR2009	Use HFR1047 (DM.2003.27); Conserve as needed
Plant (species TBD) / on plant stand	HFR2006	Acquire replacement (artificial)
Print / on large, northwest pier, facing south	HFR2006	Produce <i>giclée</i> reproduction from HFR1088 (DM.2003.92.A.B), frame and hang
Print / on large, northeast pier, facing south	HFR2006	Produce <i>giclée</i> reproduction from HFR1089 (DM.2003.93.A.B), frame and hang
Planter / center on north window ledge	HFR2006	Acquire period piece or

		reproduction
Flowers (tulips?) / in planter	HFR2006	Acquire replacement (artificial)
Portieres: two sets / hung between dining room and living room	HFR2003 HFR2010 HFR3083 HFR3084 HFR3110 HFR3114 HFR5018, p. 51	Reproduce; see HFR2005 for construction details. Fiber and color to be determined through further research.
Curtains / central (clear plate) windows, north and east	HFR2009	Reproduce, per available evidence from photograph. Fiber and color to be determined through further research.
Encyclopedia set / southeast pier cluster bookcase, facing north	HFR5018, p. 39; Also, interview with Margaret Foster, 2004	Use HFR1063 (DM.2003.2.1-.16) / 1064 (DM.2003.2.17-.29), or replace with similar set (set of Britannica, per Quinan, p. 182?)

## Dining Room Plan

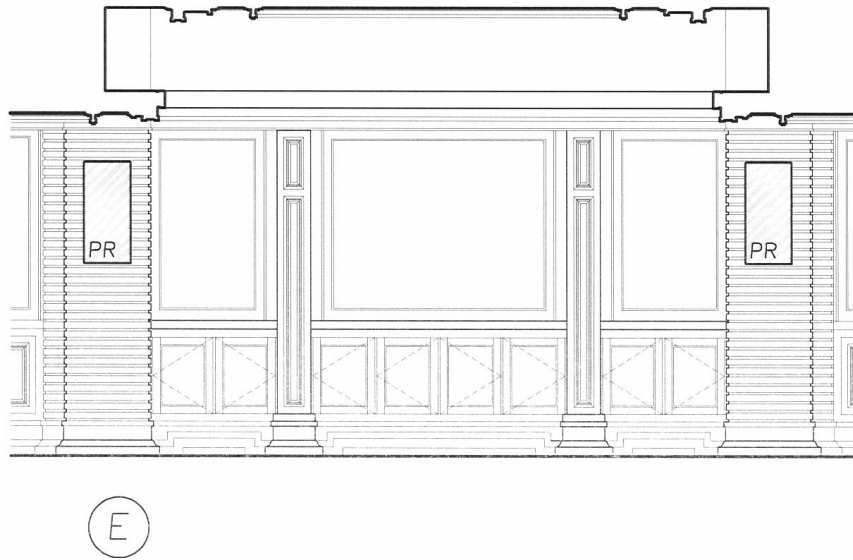


DINING ROOM PLAN  
1/4" = 1'-0"



## **Dining Room Elevation**

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DINING ROOM ELEVATION  
 $1/4" = 1'-0"$

## Unit Room

### Living Room

The available photographs and drawings indicate that all furnishings (save two Morris chairs) in the living room were placed in the alcove on the eastern half of the space. As a connecting corridor of space from dining room to library, the western half of the space apparently was intended by Wright to be unfurnished. Any attempt to furnish the western half of the living room by creating groupings of inward-facing furniture a detached inglenook effect would block the flow of space from one end of the unit room to the other along the north-south axis.

The number of furnishings shown in the 1907 Fuermann photos that effectively block one's view or circulation through the French doors onto the veranda may be surprising. With the living room visually (if not actually) open to adjoining spaces in three directions (four, if one considers the openness of the double-sided fireplace), the density of furnishings recommended for the space threatens to block at least one of these spatial connectors. It may be necessary to adjust the placement or quantity of pieces in implementing the furnishing plan in this area, to allow for visitor and staff circulation between the living room and veranda.

The Martin's arrangement of furniture seems to have varied significantly from Wright's plan already by 1907. Most notable is the change of location of sofa and circle-in-square table from the south to the north, and the addition of the family's Steinway grand piano in the southeast corner of the alcove (as of 1909). Note that the piano is angled into the space, and Wright places pianos in a similar fashion in various other plans, including the living room of Taliesin I. It is recommended that the piano be included in the room, as it has recently been completely restored, and tells a story of Dorothy Martin's playing and the Martin family's and Wright's love of music.

Object / Location	Evidence	Recommendations
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Carpet / placed per carpet plan (HFR4042)	HFR2003 HFR2007 HFR3073 HFR3157, 3158, 3159 HFR4042 (location and dimensions)	Reproduce, per textiles conservator's report of August, 2006.
Piano, grand / southeast corner of alcove, facing northwest	HFR2020 HFR3064 HFR3066 HFR4032	Use HFR1149 (restored and refinished by Illos Piano Rebuilders in 2006)
Piano bench / across front of piano	HFR2020	Reproduce, per drawings made

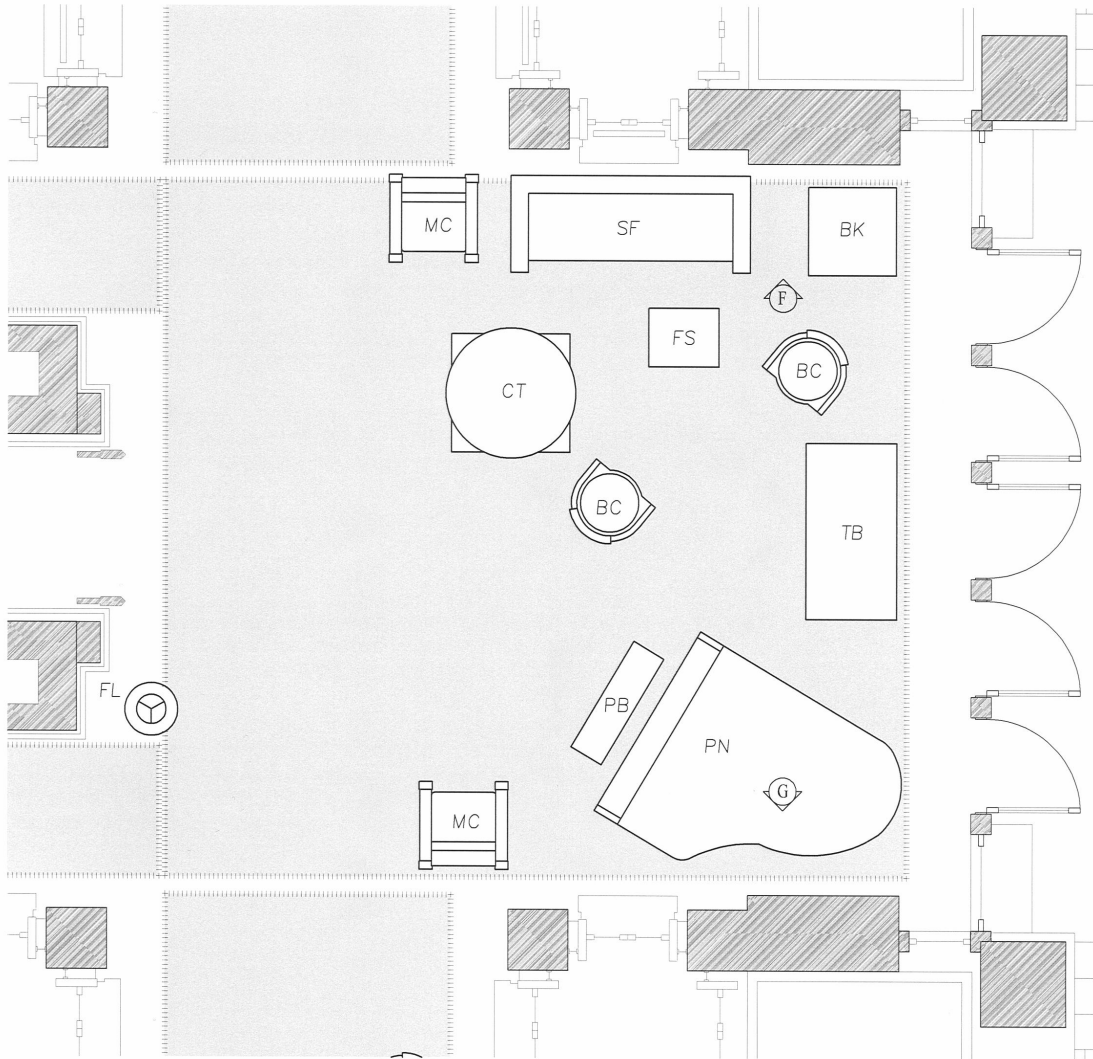
	HFR3148 HFR4032	by restoration architects, based on HFR2020
Music, sheet / on piano music stand	HFR2020	Use period or reproduction sheet music with compositions based on family recollections of Dorothy Martin's repertoire
Vase, flower / on piano, near left front corner	HFR2020	Vase in photograph may be a Van Briggles "Three Graces" vase; acquire reproduction of similar design
Table w/ cabinet doors / in east alcove, centered on band of art glass doors, facing west	HFR2003 HFR2007 HFR3049 HFR3102 HFR4035	Use HFR1055 (DM.2003.40); conserve as needed
Chair, barrel / in east alcove, near northeast corner (in front of bookcase), facing southwest	HFR2003 HFR2007 HFR3049 HFR4032 HFR4035	Reproduce from HFR1025 (DM.2003.46) or 1026 (original barrel chairs), upholstery TBD
Chair, barrel / in east alcove near middle of space, facing northeast	HFR2003 HFR2007 HFR3049 HFR4032 HFR4035	Reproduce from HFR1025 (DM.2003.46) or 1026 (original barrel chairs), upholstery TBD
Bookcase / in east alcove, near northeast corner	HFR2003 HFR2007 HFR2026	Reproduce from available evidence. Appears to be four-sided and may have rotated
Sofa w/ cabinet arms / north side of east alcove, centered on pier cluster E, facing south	HFR2003 HFR2007 HFR2010 HFR3064 HFR4032 HFR4035	Use HFR1035 (DM.2003.35). Frame has been partially conserved. Upholstery TBD. One cabinet arm may be shown open, with prop books displayed to demonstrate unusual feature.
Footstool / in front of sofa, toward east end	HFR2003 HFR2007 HFR2010 HFR5017, p. 11	Use HFR1037; conserve and needed and reupholster (original upholstery pattern evident in photos). <i>Note: this placement is somewhat arbitrary, given the highly portable nature of the object and recommended configuration of furnishings in the space overall.</i>
Table, compound (circle-in-square) / in	HFR2007	Use either HFR1052



front of sofa, aligned with west arm	HFR2010 HFR3049 HFR3065 HFR3067 HFR3102	(DM.2003.37) or 1053 (DM.2003.38); conserve as needed.
Planter / center of compound table	HFR2007	Acquire period piece or reproduction. <i>This piece is also shown in HFR2009, so this is one possible location.</i>
Flowers (Paperwhites?) / in planter	HFR2007	Acquire replacement (artificial)
Chair, òMorrisö / on west end of sofa, facing south	HFR2010 HFR3049 HFR3089 HFR3122 HFR3123	Reproduce, based on available evidence in drawings, photographs, etc.
Chair, òMorrisö / adjacent to pier cluster F, near northwest pier, facing north	HFR2010 HFR3049 HFR3089 HFR3122 HFR3123	Reproduce, based on available evidence in drawings, photographs, etc.
Print / on large pier, northeast corner	HFR2003 HFR2007	Produce <i>giclée</i> reproduction of HFR1092 (DM.2003.96.A.B), frame and hang
Print / on large pier, southeast corner	HFR2012	Produce <i>giclée</i> reproduction of HFR1094 (DM.2003.98.A.B), frame and hang
Books / in bookcase, pier cluster E, facing south	HFR2003	Use appropriate period publications or reproductions
Vase / on shelf of pier cluster E	Fuermann living room photoô see Quinan, p. 137	Use HFR1118 (DM.2003.81)
Books / in bookcase, pier cluster F, facing north		Use appropriate period publications or reproductions
Books / in bookcase (four sides)	HFR2003 HFR2007	Use appropriate period publications or reproductions
Statuette, Venus de Milo / on top of bookcase	HFR2003 HFR2007	Use reproduction. Giust Galleryô producer of Nike cast for conservatoryô may be good source.
Vase, glass / on top of bookcase	HFR2003	Acquire period piece or reproduction
Flowers / in glass vase	HFR2003	Acquire replacement (artificial)

Books and periodicals / on circle-in-square table (top and shelf)	HFR2007 HFR2010	Use appropriate period publications or reproductions
Books, set (Roycroft?) / in bookends on table (w/ cabinet doors)	HFR2003 HFR2007	Acquire Roycroft set or use reproductions
Vessel, double-handled / on table (w/ cabinet doors)	HFR2003 HFR2007	Use reproduction
Curtains / one set between each art glass door, east wall	HFR2003 HFR2007	Reproduce, per available evidence from photographs. Fiber and color to be determined through further research.

## Living Room Plan

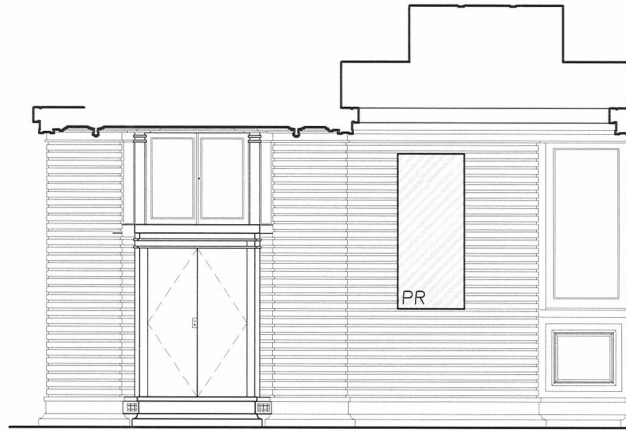


LIVING ROOM PLAN  
1/4" = 1'-0"



## Living Room Elevations

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(F)



(G)

LIVING ROOM ELEVATIONS  
1/4" = 1'-0"

## Unit Room Library

As another room on the first floor of the house *not* photographed by Fuermann & Sons in 1907, the library resists a comprehensive and definitive picture of its furnishing in the early years of the Martins' occupancy. The space is important to the biographical portrayal of Darwin Martin in that Darwin was a bibliophile and autodidact who read voraciously. The importance of an identified library space in the unit room, however, is mitigated by the fact that the Martins' large collection of books (over 2,000 volumes) was in fact stored in built-in bookcases housed in the pier clusters and in other, freestanding book storage throughout the first floor. Thus, the books, representative of Martin's edification, are woven into the fabric of the house itself, and the space designated as library becomes more of a reading lounge. This may well have been a favorite room for Darwin to read to Isabelle, whose visual impairment made direct enjoyment of the family's books difficult, if not impossible.

Anecdotal evidence from Dorothy Martin Foster indicates that the east bay of the library was also a favorite sitting area for Isabelle Martin and her mother, Katherine Reidpath. According to Dorothy, the addition of the women's favorite rocking chairs to the space made Wright "foam at the mouth." There is no indication of when this addition occurred—the chairs are shown in an undated photo\* of the library (HFR2016). With this addition, one of the pair of library sofas must have been moved out of space (one appears in an undated snapshot of the living room showing major changes to the furnishing placement overall). The recommendation to include these contentious rockers is based, in part, on a programmatic desire to reflect the presence of the women of the house—Isabelle Martin, her mother, and her hired companion Cora Herrick (Aunt Polly).

Wright's original intention for the library table, its lighting scheme and dependent seating is unclear. The "*tout ensemble*" furnishing plan (HFR4032) indicates a library table identical in plan to the dining table; the two are also generally similar in their corner stanchions (*for more detailed analysis of the extant library table, see Appendix A.*) Without sufficient evidence to reconstruct the planter and lighting units for the library table with any accuracy (the planter units may have been identical to those on the dining table, but there is no extant evidence for the lights), we recommend that the table be reproduced without them. The *tout ensemble* plan also shows, apparently, Wright's intention for seating related to the table: two "Morris" chairs are shown facing the table on the north and south sides, while the two library sofas are shown on the east and west. It is unclear from the plan whether the sofas were meant to face one another, or away from one another (backs to the table). One minor letter, however, provides an important clue: in discussing lamps for the library table (HFR3139, FLW to DDM, November 1, 1906), Wright suggests that the Martins could "run a visible soft cord connection back of sofa to floor

outlet.ö The arrangement described here suggests that Wright intended for the two sofas to face away from the table, with a reading lampö built-in, as originally designed, or moveable, as later proposedö over one's shoulder when seated.

The available evidence strongly suggests that the Martins made significant changes from Wright's original plan when furnishing the library. Wright apparently intended for the room to focus on a multi-functional, modular unit comprised of library table (with built-in planters and lighting) and two pairs of dependent seating pieces. With the rotation of the table 90 degrees from Wright's intended orientation, the potential removal of the table's corner stanchions and the addition of the rocking chairs, the Martins created a more casual and variable configuration for the room. Indeed, the photos of the space show a somewhat cluttered and crowded room.

\*although these photographs are not dated, their original context in a Martin family photo album suggests a date of 1909 or later. However, the presence of the encyclopedia stand in one image indicates a date of 1912 or later, as the drawing for this piece appears to be dated 1912.

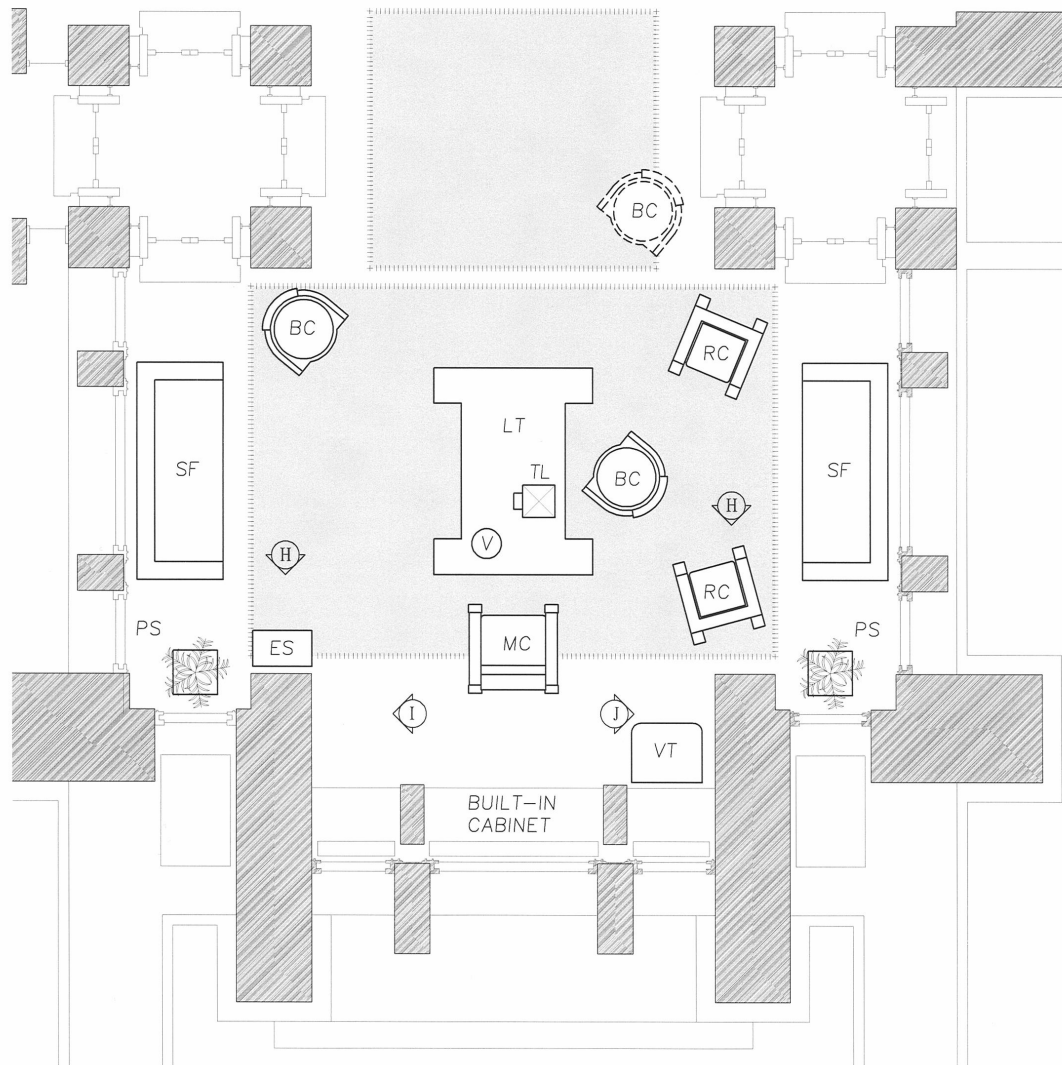
Object / Location	Evidence	Recommendations
Carpet / placed per carpet plan (HFR4042)	HFR2006 HFR3073 HFR3157, 3158, 3159 HFR4042 (location and dimensions)	Reproduce, per textiles conservator's report of August, 2006.
Library table / centered in room	HFR2013 HFR2016 HFR3049 HFR3064 HFR3102 HFR3103 HFR3118 HFR4034 HFR4032	Use HFR1057 (DM.2003.43.A-G) as evidence to reproduce table as originally designed (with 8x8 base legs and 8'6" shaped top). See report by Furniture Conservator David Bayne detailing extensive evidence of later alterations to original design of table. Reproduce table without planter and lighting units.
Sofa / west alcove, centered on windows, facing east	HFR2013 HFR3064 HFR4032	Use HFR1032 (DM.2003.32.A-C) or 1033 (DM.2003.33.A-C) (one of identical pair)
Chair, barrel / near southeast corner of pier cluster B, facing southeast	HFR2013 HFR2016 HFR4032 (not for placement)	Reproduce from HFR1025 (DM.2003.46) or 1026 (original barrel chairs), upholstery fiber and color to be determined through further research
Chair, barrel / near southeast corner of library table, facing northwest	HFR2013 HFR2016	Reproduce from HFR1025 (DM.2003.46) or 1026 (original

	HFR4032 (not for placement)	barrel chairs), upholstery fiber and color to be determined through further research
Chair, ðMorrisö / south end of library table, facing north	HFR2016 HFR3049 HFR3089 HFR3122 HFR3123	Reproduce, based on available evidence in drawings, photographs, etc.
Chair, rocking / east alcove, south end, facing northwest	HFR2016 HFR5018, p. 42	Acquire or reproduce, per further research on make and model of chair
Chair, rocking / east alcove, north end, facing southwest	HFR2016 HFR5018, p. 42	Acquire or reproduce, per further research on make and model of chair
Victrola / south end of room, east side (between large pier and center window)	HFR2013 HFR2016 HFR5014	Acquire similar, period model or reproduction
Stand, encyclopedia / against large, southwest pier	HFR2013 HFR4036 HFR5018, p. 39 HFR5019, p. 108	Use HFR1062 (DM.2003.1), with HFR1063 (DM.2003.2.1-16) or 1064 (DM.2003.2.17-29) (encyclopedia sets) or encyclopedia Britannica
Stand, plant / southeast corner of east alcove	HFR2016 HFR4032 (not for placement)	Use HFR1050 / 1051 (DM.2003.28) <i>This is one possible placement</i>
Lamp, table / on library table, near southeast corner, with shade projecting eastwards	HFR2013 HFR2016 HFR3103 HFR3139 HFR3148 HFR3154 HFR3155	Use HFR1103 (DM.2003.74.A)
Print / on large, southeast pier, facing north	HFR2016	Print not identified; use reproduction of appropriate image akin to existing pillar prints by Koryusai, Eisho or Utamaro
Print / on large, southeast pier, facing west	HFR2016	Print not identifiable from photo; use reproduction based on others in collection. This print may be a later addition.
Print / on large, southwest pier, facing east	HFR2013	Print not identifiable from photo; use reproduction based on others in collection. This print may be a

		later addition.
Print / on large, southwest pier, facing north	HFR2013	Print not identifiable from photo, but may be determined by dimensions and space above encyclopedia stand; use reproduction based on others in collection, if necessary.
Books and periodicals / on library table (top)	HFR2013 HFR2016	Use appropriate period publications or reproductions
Books and periodicals / on library table (lower shelves)	HFR2013 HFR2016	Use appropriate period publications or reproductions
Vase, large Japanese / on library table, southwest corner	HFR2013	Use HFR1116 (DM.2003.79)
Portieres: two sets / hung between living room and library	HFR2005 HFR2010 HFR2013 HFR3083 HFR3084 HFR3110 HFR3114 HFR5018, p. 51	Reproduce; see HFR2005 for construction details. Fiber and color to be determined through further research.



## Library Plan

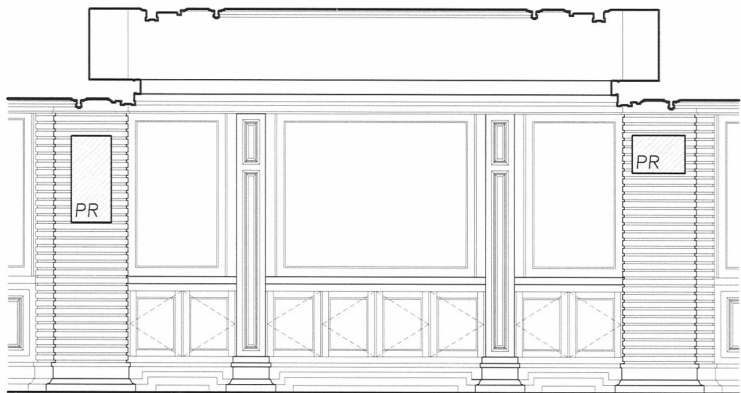


LIBRARY PLAN  
1/4" = 1'-0"

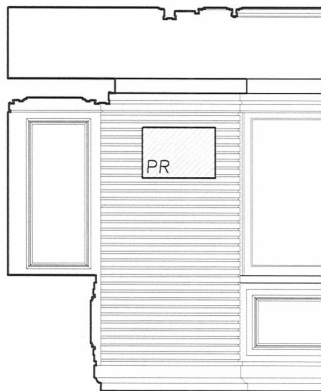


**Library Elevations**

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H



I



J

LIBRARY ELEVATIONS  
1/4" = 1'-0"

## Master Bedroom

Darwin D. and Isabelle Martin's bedroom— simply "first bed room" in Wright's drawings— constituted an almost entirely built-in environment (akin to the Bursar's office or kitchen in this regard). As such, the majority of the space will be furnished by the built-in components specified in the Phase V restoration drawings. The linens and personal effects are largely speculative, though based on necessary and period-specific precedents.

Assuming that Wright's plans for the space were executed as drawn, there would have been virtually no opportunity for the Martins to customize the room with additional, moveable furnishings. The desire for such personalization of bedrooms is evidenced by Mrs. Martin's desire to have the guest bedrooms (fifth and sixth bedrooms, later occupied by Mrs. Martin and Cora Herrick) trimmed in mahogany to match existing mahogany bedroom furniture that the family presumably brought from their previous residence (see letter of 23 January, 1905, Darwin D. Martin to Frank Lloyd Wright).

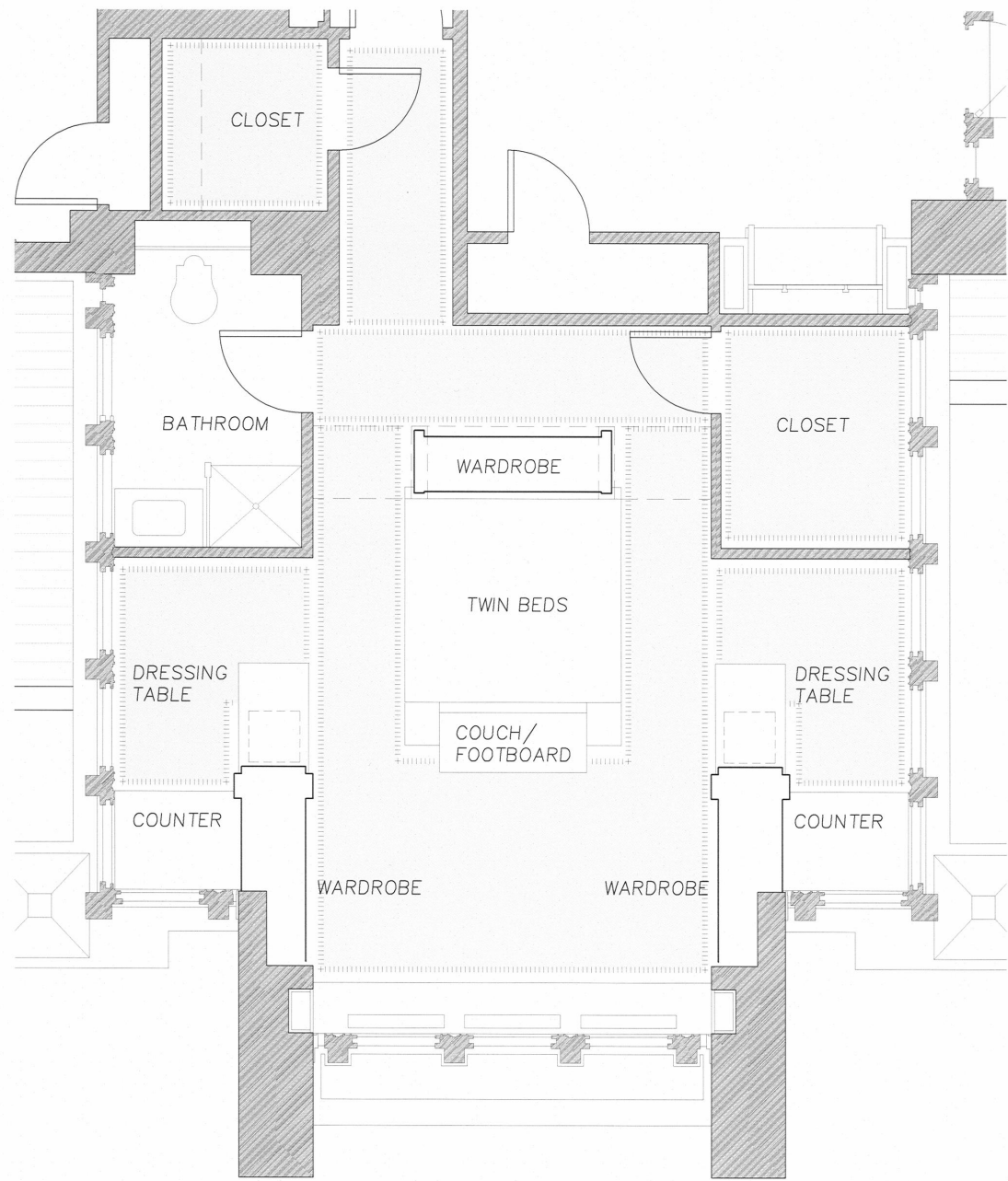
The presence and placement of the Japanese prints is also largely speculative, as there is no direct evidence pertaining to the distribution of prints on the second floor of the house. A certain process of elimination may guide the application of these prints— placing a number of prints in the collection that are not used on the first floor.

Object / Location	Evidence	Recommendations
Carpet / placed per floor plan		<p>Presence of carpet is speculative, based on bedroom of other Wright houses of the era.</p> <p>Specific configuration of carpeting sections, color, fiber and pile unknown.</p>
Wardrobe— headboard unit / centered in north bay of room	FLWA 0405.005 FLWA 0405.070 FLWA 0405.071 UBA 22.8-5 UBA 22.8-6 HFR3041: 168 HFR3049: 191 HFR3118: 282 HFR3119: 283 HFR5017 HFR5018	<p><i>As this is a built-in component, its construction will be specified by the architects and included in Phase V—Martin House interior restoration.</i></p>

Beds, twin (pair) / extending southward from wardrobe headboard unit	FLWA 0405.005 FLWA 0405.070 FLWA 0405.071 UBA 22.8-5 UBA 22.8-6 HFR3041: 168 HFR3049: 191 HFR3118: 282 HFR3119: 283 HFR5017 HFR5018	Reproduce, per available evidence
Bedsread / on beds		Acquire period linens or reproductions
Pillows and pillowcases / on beds		Acquire period linens or reproductions
Footboard couch unit / south end of twin beds	FLWA 0405.005 FLWA 0405.070 FLWA 0405.071 UBA 22.8-5 UBA 22.8-6 HFR3041: 168 HFR3049: 191 HFR3118: 282 HFR3119: 283 HFR5017 HFR5018	Reproduce, per available evidence
Wardrobe counter dressing table unit / east / southeast corner of room	FLWA 0405.005 FLWA 0405.070 FLWA 0405.071 HFR3041: 168 HFR3049: 191 HFR3118: 282 HFR3119: 283	<b><i>As this is a built-in component, its construction will be specified by the architects and included in Phase V—Martin House interior restoration.</i></b>
Personal effects / toiletry items for Isabelle Martin / on counter dressing table surfaces, east		Acquire period or reproduction personal items, including Larkin items
Wardrobe counter dressing table unit / west / southwest corner of room	FLWA 0405.005 FLWA 0405.070 FLWA 0405.071 HFR3041: 168 HFR3049: 191 HFR3118: 282 HFR3119: 283	<b><i>As this is a built-in component, its construction will be specified by the architects and included in Phase V—Martin House interior restoration.</i></b>
Personal effects / toiletry items for Darwin D. Martin / on counter dressing table surfaces, west		Acquire period or reproduction personal items, including Larkin items

<p>Prints / potential locations: north passageway, north wall, facing wardrobe, north wall, west dressing alcove, facing south, north wall, east dressing alcove, facing south.</p>		<p>Use <i>giclée</i> reproduction of remaining prints from collection (those not placed on first floor)</p>
<p>Shades / on windows</p>	<p>Margy Meyerson, wife of University at Buffalo President Martin Meyerson, found a number of old shades in a bedroom closet when the couple lived in the house in the late 1960s.</p> <p>Historic photographs of the Martin House exterior (Fuermann photos and those assumed to be Fuermanns, c. 1907) clearly show shades drawn on various bedroom windows.</p>	<p>Use historically appropriate reproductions, install on windows especially bathroom and dressing room</p>

Master Bedroom Plan



MASTER BEDROOM  
1/4" = 1'-0"



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Darwin D. Martin with children Darwin R. and Dorothy in reception room. Photo by Müller, 1912

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## VII. APPENDICES

**A. *Construction Analysis of the DMH “Library Table”* – report by Furniture Conservator David Bayne**

**B. Martin House Complex Docent Study Guide**



## Appendix A:

### Construction Analysis of the DMH “Library Table”

The following investigation was done to determine if the Library Table (DM.2003.43) from the Darwin Martin House was possibly the Dining Table with modifications, or the original Library Table with modifications. It was also suggested that maybe this table was a combination of both the Dining Table and the Library Table. The evidence so far seems to indicate that DM.2003.43 is the Library Table that has been modified and simplified. The changes are quite complex, as is the evidence, and it is difficult to convey the details with pictures alone. Actually taking the table apart and examining it, is the best way to understand what has happened.

Several documents are useful. They show that FLW's original intent was to have both library and dining tables similar. There are three drawings or more accurately, depictions in pencil, of both tables available to me at this time.<sup>1</sup> There are also two undated photos of the library showing the table and a 1907 view of the dining room that shows the dining table very well.<sup>2</sup> Comparing the photos of just the dining table with the drawings, it seems that what was built was not what was drawn. For the library table, the undated photos and the 1905 drawing do not correspond to the actual table in the lab. If this table is the library table, then the modifications were extensive and took place at a later date.



Standing back and looking at the table (Figure 1) it is an impractical design for dining. There are six drawers under the top and two full size shelves between the legs. These all would have been in the way of diner's feet, legs, and chairs unless the top was very wide, which it is not. Even if the top was wide it would make access to the drawers difficult and their use impractical. If

Figure 1

<sup>1</sup> HFR4032: 22.0 8.1 which appears in Jack Quinan, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House: Architecture as Portraiture* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004) Figure 75. HFR 4033: 22.0 8.1 Quinan, 2004 Figure 77. HFR 4034: 22.0 8.3 in Eric Jackson-Forsberg *Historic Furnishings Report for Selected Spaces of the Darwin Martin House Buffalo NY Vol. 1 (Buffalo: Martin House Restoration Corporation, 2005)*. The latter is only available as an indistinct photocopy at this time and appears to be of just the library table.

<sup>2</sup> The library is HFR2013, Jackson-Forsberg 2005, p.163 and HFR2016 Jackson-Forsberg 2005, p.166. The dining table is HFR2006 Quinan 2004, Figure 78. The photos of the library in the Historic Furnishings Report are bad photocopies.

the table had been used for dining there would be the inevitable wear on the shelves from feet and chairs banging into them. There is the expected wear for a library table but not for a dining table. On the other hand the extensive modifications discussed below would almost seem to make anything possible. It is hard to imagine the circumstances necessary to transform the table in the undated photo to the present table. These changes were expensive and sophisticated. In effect a whole new table was made from parts of the original. Was the original the dining table or the library table?

The evidence is broken down into four areas:

1. The top or *öcapö*
2. The sub-top
3. the legs and feet
4. the drawers and drawer cavities.

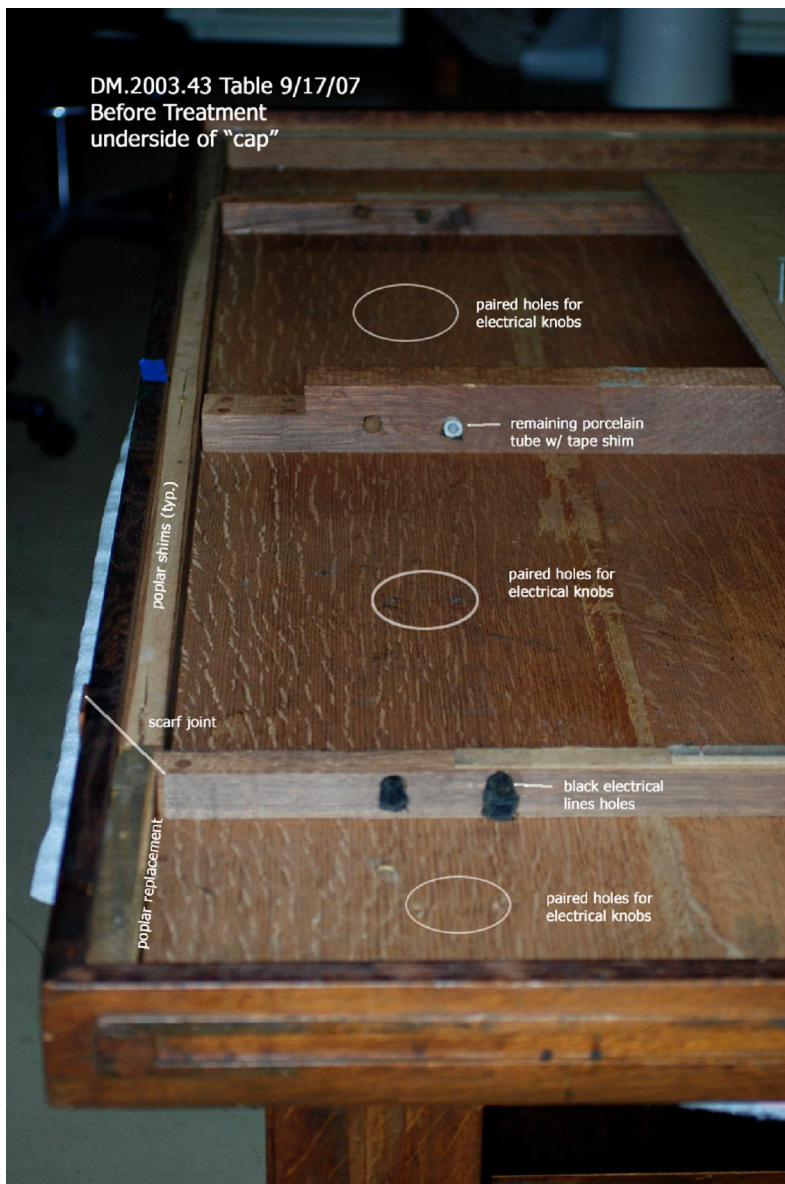


Figure 2

### The "cap"

The table top is actually in two pieces. The *öcapö* is a large veneered surface that is attached to vertical sides that are about 20 high. It resembles an inverted tray and it is what is seen. It makes the top look thick and substantial. The cap is screwed to a sub-top which is a flat frame composed of wide boards that outline the perimeter. The perimeter boards are connected with two cross-pieces on the long sides. The sub-top is not seen (except from underneath) and not finished. The assembly sequence is that the sub-top is first screwed to the tops of the legs. The cap is

then laid on top and screwed to the sub-top. There are variations to this top assembly on most of the other DMH tables.

The underside of the cap (Figure 2) shows the layout for the knob and tube wiring used for the lights in the stanchions. The tubes going through the cross pieces are obvious. In between the crosspieces are paired holes threaded for screws that presumably held flat ceramic plates. The ceramic plates clamped two electrical wires about 3ö apart. The paired holes turn at the corners and follow the bays along the outside to the other corners. So there was electricity in each corner.

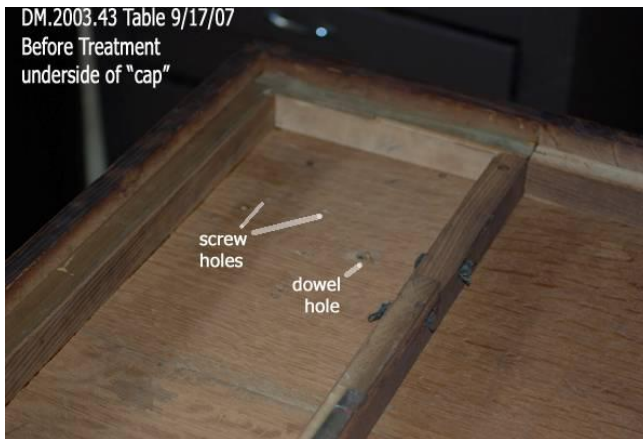


Figure 3

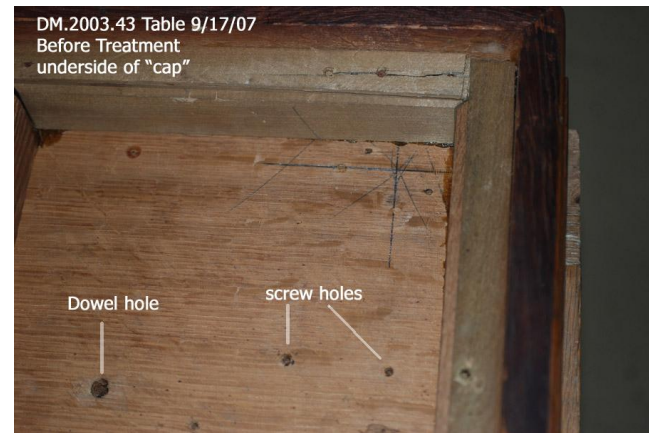


Figure 4

Also in each corner is a larger hole marked 'dowel hole' in Figures 3 & 4. This hole may have been used to position the stanchions on top. A dowel in the bottom of the stanchion would have come through the hole. Similar holes can be seen in the photo of the dining table top.<sup>3</sup> Alternatively, they could have been used for passing wires through the cap into the stanchions although it is not very wide for two wires, given the insulation materials available in 1905. It is possible that only one of the two wires necessary for a light went through this hole and the other wire went through another hole in legs of the stanchions. The fragment of the stanchion that we have has holes through each of the legs, dowel holes, and fragments of dowels.

At first glance it seems that the holes were not used since they do not go through the cap. Presently, the veneer covers the holes. Another explanation is that the dowel holes could have been used to attach something under the table, but there isn't much room and nothing makes a lot of sense. We are left with the hypothesis that the top was re-veneered and that these holes probably had something to do with wires or dowels for the stanchions.

<sup>3</sup> Quinan 2003, Fig. 77.



The other bit of important cap evidence is the scarf joints. One is indicated in Figure 2 and Figures 5, 6 and 7 provide detailed views of the other scarfs. There are two on each of the long sides. They were made after the cap was assembled, since there is a saw mark on the underside of the cap. On the outside they are covered by a decorative square donut. They are very tight and very nicely made joints. On the inside of the lip between the scarf and the corner of the cap is a short piece of poplar, not oak. All the rest of the interior framework for the cap is oak but the poplar is scarfed onto the last 8ö of each side. It seems that if there were extensions or öwingsö on the table as the pictures and drawings indicate, this is where they would be located. The scarf joint and poplar pieces are where the wings were removed.

The original cap had decorative inlays on the outside of the lip that extended all the way across the ends (see Quinan 2003, Figure 77). It seems as the ends of the lip were shortened and reused, but that process would have also cut through the decorative box on the outside of the lip. Careful exam of the lip shows where the cut was repaired, once again with skill.



Figure 5

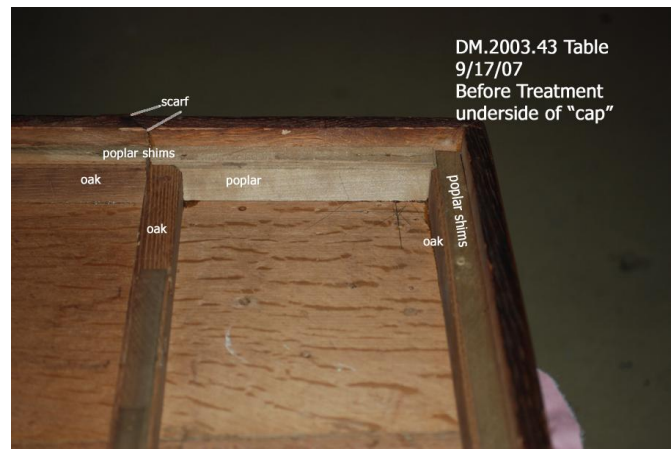


Figure 6

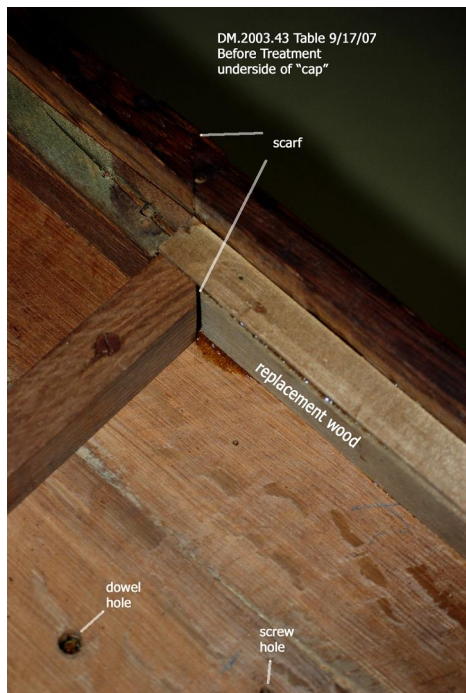


Figure 7

Note there are also shims cut from poplar about 1/8ö thick. The shims apparently space the cap slightly higher than the oak frame originally intended, but it is not clear why this was necessary.

### The sub-top

The sub top has a wealth of information since it is the bridge between the cap and the legs.



The outside edge of the sub-top is pictured in Figures 8 and 9. In the background of these photos the flat framework of the sub-top can be seen and how it sits on the legs. In all four corners there is a slot mortise on the edge of the long side. In three of the mortises are remnants of the tenons that fitted into them (Figure 9 for example). The slot mortise and tenon joinery here is identical in technique and tools to the long slot mortises on the inside edges of the sub-top. The mortise and tenon evidence on the outside edges suggest that wings were attached here and the evidence aligns with the poplar replacement pieces and scarf joints of the cap.

Figure 10 is looking straight down on a corner of the sub-top and it shows the arrangement of holes that is typical of the other corners. These holes are countersunk for screws that presumably attached the sub-top to the legs from above. None of these 3 to 4 corner countersunk holes are used now. The photos show the heads of some of the screws used now to attach the sub-top.



Figure 8



Figure 9

In each corner there is also a countersunk screw hole at the edge of the sub-top that has been cut in half. (see note in Figures 10, 11, and 12). These three holes form a 90 degree angle and are approximately 3 1/8" apart. On the tops of legs are four holes that also form a rough square approximately 3 1/8" on a side (Figure 14). It seems obvious that screws went through the sub-top into the legs, but the countersunk holes in the sub-top and the holes in the legs do not now align. The only way to get them to align is to move the legs along the diagonal out from their present position.

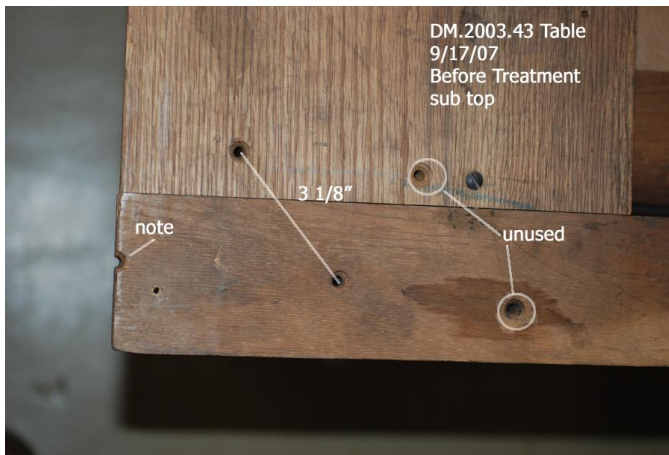


Figure 10

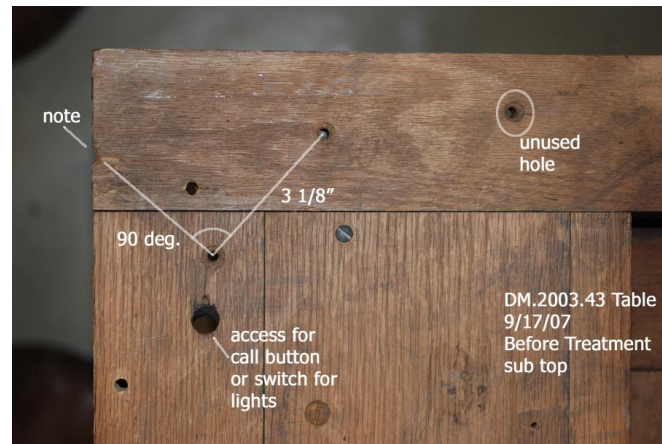


Figure 11

On Figures 10, 11, 12, and 13 are additional countersunk holes that are marked *unused*. At first glance these holes might seem to align with the tops of the fin columns on each leg drawn by FLW and seen in the photos of the dining table and the library table. These holes have the same tool marks as the holes that were used to attach the legs and seem to be the same age, but do not align with any existing part of the legs or stretchers nor do they seem to align with where the fin columns might have intersected the sub-top.

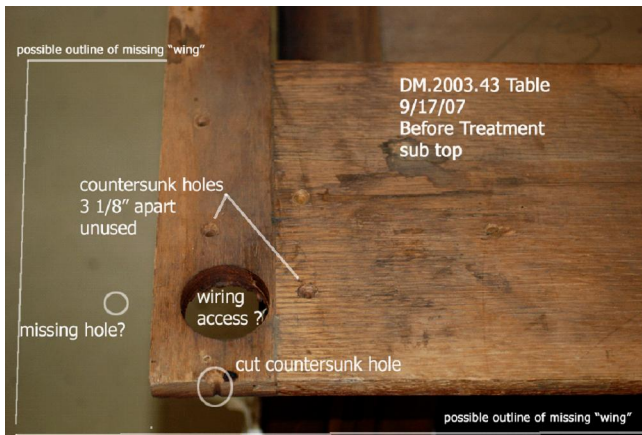


Figure 12



Figure 13

There are two additional holes in the sub top that are very interesting. One hole appears to be for a switch (Figure 11 and 15) and diagonally across the table is a very large hole that is most likely the access hole for the wires (Figure 12 and 13). If the legs were moved out to the corner of the sub-top as suggested by the countersunk holes, then the large hole aligns over the hollow cavity in one of the legs. Not coincidentally there appears to be a tube or conduit at the bottom of the leg where the wires entered the table from the floor. (Figure 16)

In summary the evidence of the sub-top suggests that the original table was both longer (at least  $3\frac{1}{4}$ ö overall) and wider (at least  $1\frac{1}{2}$  -  $1\frac{3}{4}$ ö overall) than it is presently. The legs were moved diagonally in towards the center. A very conjectural outline of the missing wing is drawn on Figure 12.

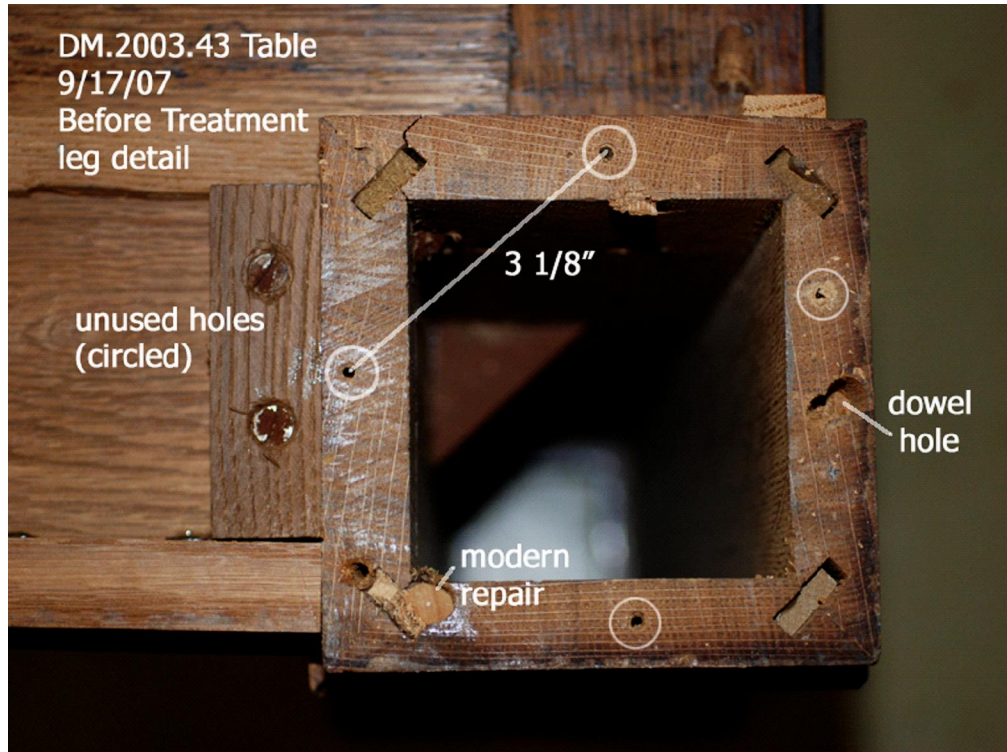


Figure 14





Figure 15



Figure 16

## The legs and feet.

The tops of the legs and their pattern of holes have been explained.

At the base of the legs is the evidence of the fins. On all four feet in each of the corners are scarf joints and a piece of wood has been tipped in (Figures 17 and 18). Clearly seen in Figure 18 are the strips of veneer used to hide the fasteners for the added piece as well as the vertical scarf line. Interestingly, the grain direction of the added piece is at  $45^{\circ}$  to the grain direction of the moldings (Figure 18). As with the other modifications the scarfs were very well done. The joints are tight and the color match is excellent.



Figure 17

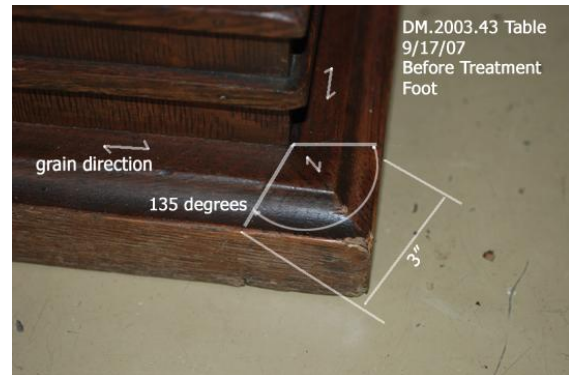


Figure 18

The scarf joints indicate that the fins were about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  wide at the bottom. Given the arrangement of the coves and flats of the moldings on the feet, the upright portion, or secondary leg, would have been about  $3\frac{1}{4}$  thick.

The fins and secondary legs radiated out of each corner of the feet. This is depicted in the FLW drawings, the undated photos, and in the physical evidence. The shelves must have been attached to the secondary leg at the corners, similar to the way the shelves are attached presently to the corners of the legs. The original arrangement would have made the shelves look floating as was done with another FLW-DMH piece (Jackson-Forsberg 2005, 60. HFR1059). Unfortunately it is not clear though how the inside secondary leg interacted with the underside of the drawer cavities. Where did it terminate at the top? There are no holes for screws or other attachments under the drawer cavity and it is likely that the evidence was cut away when the drawer cavity was notched for the legs.

The table was tilted on one side and the underside of the feet examined. There is only one piece of new evidence; holes were made for castors. Apparently the table was intended for castors but most likely they were not installed. The other tables, for example DM2003.17, as well as the sofas all were intended to have ball and

socketö castors. Castors are also indicated in the drawing of the dining room table. These types of castors proved to be wildly impractical and caused considerable damage to even the lightest pieces of furniture (and probably the floor). If these holes had received castors there would be marks from the socket being pressed into the wood and if they had been used there would be damage. None of this evidence can be seen and the specially made holes are pristine, Figure 19.



Figure 19



Figure 20

The tube in the bottom of the one leg can be seen in Figure 20. Although it is copper colored the tube is made of some sort of synthetic material that might be an early version of electrical insulator. It is stuck in the foot but does not piece the foot. By sticking a wire down the tube, the length of the hole was measured at 3 ½ to 4ö which means that the exit is very close to the outside edge of the foot. If so than the exit hole may be covered by the veneer used to cover the fin removals.



Figure 21

A good shot of the present relationship between the tube and the large hole in the sub-top can be seen in Figure 21. As mentioned earlier it seems likely that the hole was originally positioned over the top of the leg and that electrical wires came up through the leg and into the top.

Something that is not found on the underside of the feet is any evidence of the stretcher system that is seen in the photos of the dining room table and that is drawn by FLW, which

supports the hypothesis that this table is the library table and not the dining table.

The legs contain additional evidence of modifications. At the top of each leg there is a screw hole on one side and a varnish line of the adjacent side. Next to the screw hole is evidence of a glue block and apparently a vertical board was attached at this point. Likewise on the varnished side there is evidence of a vertical wooden piece. Most likely these were where the aprons were formerly attached and if the legs are reoriented<sup>4</sup> so the screw holes face each other (and the varnish sides face each other), then it appears that on the long sides of the table there were aprons attached to the legs  $2\frac{3}{4}$ " from the front of the legs. On the varnish sides the aprons were  $4\frac{1}{4}$ " from the side of the leg. Note that  $2\frac{3}{4}$ " was cut from the ends of the drawer dividers on each side (see below).

### **The drawers and drawer cavities**

Retracting the legs towards the center of the table may have necessitated a shrinkage of the drawer cavities.

On the underside of the sub-top is a groove and a screw hole, Figure 22 and 23, that indicates that the drawer dividers have been shortened on each side by  $2\frac{3}{4}$ ". If the shortened cavities caused the drawers to bump the back of the cavities then the drawers would have to be modified. It is not clear though that changes in the drawers were necessary as a result.

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<sup>4</sup> When the table was modified, two of the legs were rotated 90 degrees and swapped from one corner to the other. This has to be reversed to bring it back into the proper orientation.



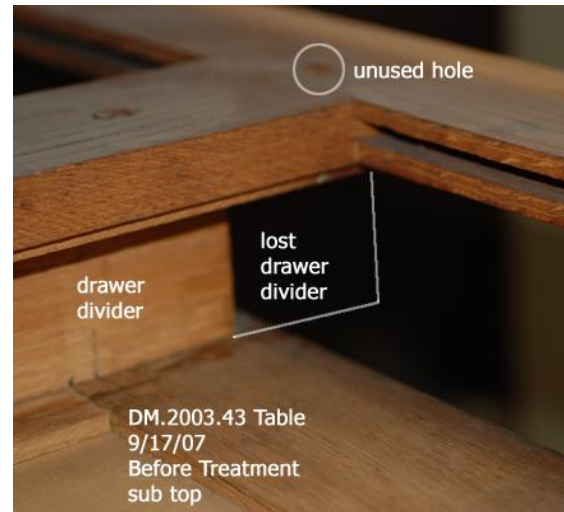


Figure 22, left and Figure 23, above

Two drawer fronts are different from the other four and are of cheaper flat sawn wood, with a pale yellow color. One drawer bottom has been replaced with  $\frac{1}{4}$ " fir plywood. Two of the six are also narrower than the other four, but these two are in the center bay and are not the ones that the fronts have been changed. If the two narrower drawers were in the outside bays and they were the ones with modified fronts then it would be logical to suggest that the drawer cavity had been modified when the legs were moved in. Since this is not the case it seems that the variability of the drawer fronts and bottoms were repairs. Probably related, is that all the dovetail joints on the drawers have been broken and reassembled.

## Summary

The difference between the library table and the dining table are the presence of the drawers and the big shelves of the library table. The dining table had stretchers and may have been in segments which means there were additional legs that cannot be seen, but may appear on the FLW drawing. Given the extensive modifications of the current table it does not rule out the possibility that the dining table was changed to make what is now called the library table. However the simple and most direct conclusion that explains most of the physical evidence is that this is the library table and it was modified at some point after its delivery to the Martins. This means that the whereabouts of the dining table is unknown.



Other things to explore:

- Is the finish on the shelves the same as the finish on the legs?
- X-ray a corner of the cap and see if there are screw holes etc beneath the lip pieces.
- Jim Briggs and Chris Flagg have agreed to make a partial drawing of the current table top construction.
- Build a full-size model of the pre-modification library table from cardboard using the available evidence. Make a drawing of the reconstructed library table.
- Make a drawing of the dining table based on the reconstructed library table.

