Feature Page

Time to acknowledge the best of Wright for 2011

First; The restoration and adaptive reuse of
the City National Bank Building and Park Inn Hotel with Law Offices,

To SEE; click here

Second; Completion of the 3-volume (Complete) Frank Lloyd Wright
from Taschen.

I have now completed a page by page study of these three volumes, which confirms my earlier findings with some new insights.

This is a stupendous effort of the part of Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer. He has rethought what he presented in the 12-volume Monograph and given us new dates and,

more importantly, a visual presentation that is stunning. Photos and graphics 15.75 inches wide by 12 inches high adorn many pages. Some
drawing spread across

the full 31.5 inches on facing pages. Only those fortunate to have obtained either of the two Selected Drawings Portfolios from Horizon Press,
1977 and 1979

will have seen anything equal. Much of Wright's work is documented as never before; Taliesin West commands 32 pages!

Yet there are caveats, many listed below in my first survey of these tomes. Now I emphasize the failure of co-editor Peter Gossel to obtain the
finest supportive photos.

S.176, the William B Greene house is shown from the north, the Harry Robinson alterations and addition side, while a photo of the original all-
Wright was available
The Loren Pope house, S.268, is shown at its National Trust site, with the shadows falling in a way they never would have at the original site.

Barnsdall Residence B, S.211, features what is apparently Wright's first use of the all-glass (butted) corner window. A photo of that should have been used (it is available).

Time and again, the best available photo is not used. Gossel failed Pfeiffer big time. For instance, my entire archive of over 30,000 photos was made available to Gossel. He could find better color photos in *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, A Complete Catalog*, and better photos in B&W in *The Frank Lloyd Wright Companion*, most of which are also available in color! Why did he not use them?

With these, and other caveats below, this is still both the least expensive and most fully-documented collection of the works of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Welcome it is!

This is volume one of *Frank Lloyd Wright, The Complete Works*

This is volume two of *Frank Lloyd Wright, The Complete Works*

It is a much better presentation than volume three, with fewer problems. It is notable for full page (15.5" x 11.25") photos and drawings., including Wright's magnificent drawing of Barnsdall Park (S.208-S.211) that is presented 27.5" x 11"! Many full page photos, such as the Hanna living room in full color. If you are deciding between volumes 2 & 3, our recommendation would be volume 2, which documents much of the transition from American Prairie through to Democratic American Usonia. However, errors are replete, including of the altered Raymond Carlson house, S.326, even tho color photos of the correct original exist.
This is volume three of *Frank Lloyd Wright, The Complete Works* by Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer via Taschen publishers and co-edited by Peter Gössel.

Take Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer's 12-volume *Monograph*, at a cost you can't afford even if you can find all 12 volumes, compress it into 3 volumes at $200 each, with more color than in the *Monograph*, and you have something that qualifies as a "must have" for those who want projects and built work *in toto*.

This review considers only Volume Three. Volumes One and Two share similar comments.

First things first. It is **not** complete.

Even so, you'll probably want it for what it does offer.

Where this volume may be called 'complete' is that it includes all the projects as well as the built work, everything, apparently, in the archives of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation. For each item there are the drawings, reproduced in color. For each built work there are also photos, sometimes black & white, often in color.

While there are many stunning photographs, there are also some wretched ones where good ones exist and could have been had from myself and many others of my acquaintance. I know, because I offered Mr Gössel anything from my files after Julius Shulman introduced and recommended me to Benedict Taschen. All they asked for was my copy of Aaron Green's photo of the Berger (Eddie's) Dog House, S.330A..

Here are some sample photos for you to compare with what Taschen published.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.326 Raymond Carlson; the Taschen photo is of the house with a non-Wright extension. Shame on Taschen.</th>
<th>S.397 Meyers Medical clinic; the Tom Heinz photo they used is defaced by a later owner's sign. Shame on Tom and Taschen.</th>
<th>S.424 Fasbender medical Clinic, is shown with a brown painted roof, not the original terne metal blue. Shame on Taschen.</th>
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<tr>
<td>S.356 Anderson Court Shops; the Taschen photo is defaced by signs and a car blocking the view.</td>
<td>S.432 ASU's Gammage Auditorium is another example of where a black and white photo does no justice to Wright's warm tonalities.</td>
<td>S.347 Welbie Fuller; here it is in full color. I have several other color views.</td>
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Of course, there's lots more samples where these come from. The biggest problem with unsatisfactory photos lies with Taschen for using Juergen Nogai to make "current" photos. Too many of his photos do not show Wright as originally done, but Wright as added to by an architect other than Wright (See, for instance, William Thaxton public façade, which shows a terrible non-Wright addition to the rear of the building). Too often he seems unwilling to wait for the sun to give the needed photographic image some life. He even submits to Taschen a photo of the version of the Peterson Cottage, S.430, built for Don and Virginia Lovness as if it were the façade of the Lovness house. It is called "Garden View," tho there is no garden. There other photographers whose uninspired work is included, but shall for the nonce, remain nameless here.

The Frank Lloyd Wright Companion could have been done in color for the extant work, and I requested a color signature be added for the revised edition, but the financial powers at the University of Chicago Press saw no profit in a book that has sold four times what they expected and returned a profit to a not-for-profit university publisher. The added signature (32 pages) would have also allowed "The Mysterious 29" and others to be added, but space was denied me.

It is rather sad that neither Pfeiffer nor Gösse can read the plans they published. Time and again they give their own names for projects, rather than accept what Wright stated on his drawing. They offer "Glenn and Ruth Richardson, Service Station, Automobile Dealership, Restaurant, and House." Wright called it "Garage and Restaurant." Have they no respect for the man this book is about and his choices? This is extremely sloppy and unscholarly editing.

Yet there are interesting comparisons to be made between Wright's design and what was completed. Consider S.431 Pilgrim Congregational Church. Eight full-color drawings reveal the magnificent structure Wright designed, and two color photos reveal how little was achieved in the built work. At least with this volume and The Frank Lloyd Wright Companion in hand, you can compare "as designed" with "as built."

Here, too, are projects that should have been built, and might still be, if politicians can get beyond their linear ways of thinking. Most important is "Pro Bono Publico," Wright's incredible creation for an Arizona State Capitol building.

For the two Erdman Prefabs, S.406 - S.412, eleven buildings each with variations however minor, yet of the Prefab #1 they show only the VanTamelen S.406, Duncan S.407 and Cass S.409, this latter with an uphill view with the non-Wright basement. They show only the first of the two Prefab #2 units.

They did not include the Aaron Green's Frank Lloyd Wright Field Office, S.348. Green did a preliminary drawing and Wright took that plan, redesigned the flow of traffic completely, so the design, even as Green himself offered to me, is Wright's. But, of course, Pfeiffer has no plan, no drawings, in the archive, so he doesn't include it. What will Pfeiffer do concerning some early houses long admitted to be by Wright (for example, Chauncey Williams S.033, George W Smith, S.046), and all the River Forest houses on William Street but for which the archives have no plan?
As simplified for publication in the *Frank Lloyd Wright Companion*, based on the building reassembled in the Heinz Architectural Center, Pittsburgh, PA

Frank Lloyd Wright's version as submitted to me by Aaron Green, FAIA. Green also showed me his original design which required visitors to turn left at the entry, walk to the Grant Street wall, cross into the drafting room (where the desk is located), to get to the Conference/Wright's room. "Wright had the right idea" noted Green.

Now, this is Wrightian. Yes, Aaron Green was a brilliant designer . . . .

... but he refused to take credit for how Wright redesigned his original thoughts, making them his own.

Another aspect of "incomplete" is where a project is not satisfactorily documented, but could have been. Such is "Fresh air camp, Hartland, Michigan." I have a prospectus sent out from the "camp" detailing its plans, its client, and such, while they call it "an enigmatic commission." Yet never did Pfeiffer nor Gössel contact me regarding Michigan projects which, as a native and resident of the state, are of special interest.

So, what can we expect from the other two volumes? The ASBH drawings alone count nearly a thousand. Will all appear in the two remaining volumes? Or will be be cheated again, massively?

This year marks the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Guggenheim Museum, S.400. Perhaps that is why Volume 3 is published first, for it opens with one page of Florida Southern College and then provides 19 pages of the Guggenheim!!! 3 color photos of the building plus two color shots of a cutaway model of the museum. 6 B&W photos of the finished structure. 5 cartoons. 28 plans and sections in color. And so on. Stunning!

I should, of course, take umbrage at the Bibliography. Of course, *The Frank Lloyd Wright Companion* is listed. Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer has said it is always on his desk, for quick answers regarding any built work. He made that volume possible by providing plans where I had no other access. But the Companion could not have been done until *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, a complete catalog* was done, back in 1974. Yet it is not listed. Instead, Tom Heinz's *Field Guide* is listed, tho it is repelete with errors, such as misspelling a client's name. Also, Heinz needed my *Catalog* to do his *Field Guide*. His book is a field guide, but there are no overarching maps connecting the items within a regional group, as the *Catalog* has. Further, Heinz uses accession numbers (Taliesin file numbers) as if they were catalog numbers, even tho that requires a chronological ordering from 0 (digital) or 1 (analog) to whatever (519 building units are listed in my *Catalog*, but variations of a unit make this 433 catalog numbers). Who taught Heinz to do such a stupid thing? Why doesn't Heinz understand academic procedures?

Sadly, these three volumes should have, and could have, been "definitive." That a publisher with the resources and reputation of Taschen should have fallen so far short of that goal is distressing.

In American Proceeding, subtitled *Building the Grant house with Frank Lloyd Wright*, by the eldest Grant child, Donna Grant Reilly, is a wonderful book (Meadowside Press, Hanover, N.H., 2010, 196 pps $22.95). It might bring a tear to your eye.

Mrs Reilly experienced the entire process, from living in the first house built by her parents to their deciding to build a second house, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright (S.288), then the building thereof and living within. She documents visits to...
Taliesin, the quarrying of the limestone on the property, the use of aspen trees from the property to support the roof frames for the huge cantilevered concrete roof, and many other details of construction, all by her parents while she grew into her teens, a time when she could enjoy the wonder of it all.

There have been other books about individual houses - still not as many as I'd hoped for when I did *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, a complete catalog* - yet the list keeps growing, but few are as delightfully-written as this. As the child Donna, she witnessed events without preconceptions. As an adult, she demonstrates a talent for writing, as good as many a novelist, and her telling of the tale is filled with details of memories that will engage the reader at every turn.

Sorry am I, then, that, such a book can hardly be published at any reasonable price if it includes color. So there is none; I offer here two, the living room, and a view down the long stairway to the living room from the entry. Also, the plan in the book is but one floor and is gray on gray. I here offer both floors, in black on white, so you can follow the author's description as she walks you through the structure.
The names of Francesco L. L. and Charles E. Roberts, two American businessmen, are printed here in grateful acknowledgment of the fact that but for their sympathetic encouragement and aid this work would never have been accomplished.

Florence, Italy, May 6, 1910

Since a previous article written in endeavor to state the nature of the faith in the ideals and practices fashions this work (I have studied for the first time on their native soil the works of Giotto, Arno, Pisano, Michelozzi,Brunelleschi, Sansovino and Angelo and the splendid company group of sculptor and painter architects and the sculptors and painters and sculptors who were also architects. It is difficult to draw between these two epochs for some of the sculptures are good painting—most of the paintings good sculpture and in both lie the patrones of good architecture.

This confusion where it is not a blending of these arts is an amazing as it is usually unfortunate. To classify the works severity as pure painting, pure sculpture or pure architecture would be quite impossible.

be sense so many minds held that the thoroughbred would be lovely indeed—be useful educationally if only one had the time.

Be that as it may—what these men of Florence absorbed from the Greek, Byzantine and Roman forbears they bequeathed to Europe as the jewel of the Renaissance and taken together with the Gothic of the Middle Ages and the influence constitutes the soul of the Fine Arts on this Continent. From these Italian flames were lighted methods of French, German, and English artists that flickered feebly for a time and soon considered in the sensuality and extravagance of the latter period. (where true) and was entirely re-arranged in the empty forms of architecture like the "Louvre", St. Paul's, anything in Germany or since the Middle Ages until the ascension of the recent years. But this applies only to the buildings not sought consciously to be classified beautiful but the basis for any serious study of the art of architecture here as elsewhere are those indigenous characteristics of the more humble buildings everywhere which are to architecture what folklore and folk songs are to literature and music—what architects were not concerned in the aggregate of these lie those characteristics which determine German nature in the one nation and are in that country particularly charming or Italian, French, Dutch, English or Spanish nature as the case may be. These national traits are of the soul and though often slight they form the most profitable basis for any serious study of the art of building in any country. Architecture lies always intimately with environment, habits, and purposes—function and is inevitably true, always instructive, often beautiful. So underlying more artificial blossoms of the human
1.1.2015

- Amherst, Mass.
- Bingen, Wash.
- Goshen, Ind.
- Homestead, Wis.
- Lancaster, Pa.
- Lawrence, Kan.
- Miami, Fla.
- St. Louis, Mo.
- Soldotna, Alaska

- FLW UPDATE

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