

San Francisco Bay Architects'

REVIEW



Making Architecture
Ten Architects Talk About the Process

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FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

A Selection of books from the AIA/SF Bookstore

Apprentice to Genius: Years With Frank Lloyd Wright Tafel, McGraw-Hill, \$21.95. The first book on Frank Lloyd Wright by an architect and former student. Gives insights into Wright's working habits, methods, philosophy of architecture, personal quirks, personal life and his pure devotion to the "Cause of Architecture".

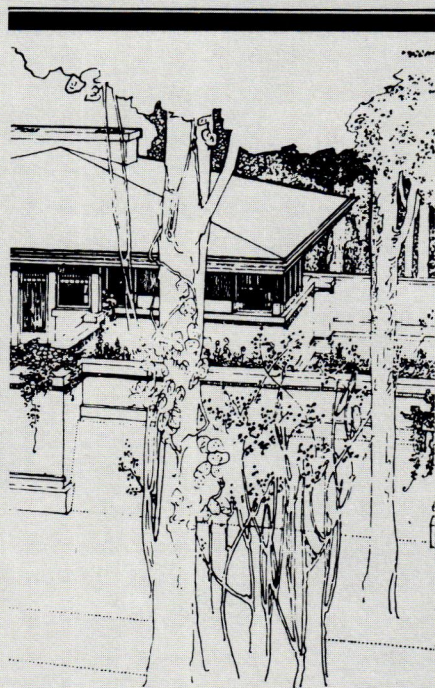
Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright: Complete Catalogue Storrer, MIT Press, \$15.00. "Progressive Architecture" summarized the book's program and plan as follows: "This work is the only publication that documents all of the buildings designed by Wright. It also offers a short commentary on each building and a picture of each extant structure."

Building With Frank Lloyd Wright: An Illustrated Memoir Jacobs/Jacobs, Chronicle, \$8.95. The authors have detailed the building of two Wright houses which were landmarks in the field of housing design—houses which pioneered such innovations as the use of solar heat. They describe a long-lasting working relationship and friendship with Wright.

In The Cause Of Architecture: Frank Lloyd Wright For The Record Gutheim, McGraw-Hill, \$20.50. Those who worked with Wright and knew him well, and who have become leaders in architectural thought today, examine the

Wright heritage now, fifteen years after his death. Includes the sixteen historic essays written by Wright for *Architectural Record*.

In The Nature Of Materials: The Buildings Of Frank Lloyd Wright Hitchcock, Da Capo Press, \$8.95. Hitchcock covers the major phases in Wright's first



Perspective of Edwin H. Cheney House, Oak Park, Illinois, 1904. From: In The Nature of Materials, by Henry-Russell Hitchcock.

50 years: the apprenticeship with J.L. Silsbee, the movement toward maturity with Sullivan, the links with Richardson, the prairie architecture, the textile block house and cantilevered skyscraper projects of the early '20s, the creativity of the late '20s and early '30s, and the projects of the Depression years.

Frank Lloyd Wright: A Study In Archi-

tectural Content Smith, Am. Life Foundation, \$100. The author discusses Wright's concern to establish three basic architectural images—symbols of the ideal life at home, at work, and in the community.

Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Water: The House And Its History Hoffmann, Dover, \$5.50. The birth, growth and maturity of Wright's famous waterfall house. 100 illustrations show development of Wright's "organic form" at Bear Run, western Pennsylvania.

Frank Lloyd Wright: His Life And His Architecture Twombly, Wiley, \$19.95. A rich, detailed text that examines Wright's public and private life, as well as his role in twentieth century society, culture and politics. An objective, close-up view of Wright and his work, with photographs, floor plans and drawings.

Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian Houses: The Case For Organic Architecture Sergeant, Whitney, \$24.50. The author defines organic architecture and shows how the first Usonian—the Jacobs house—incorporates Wright's innovative, ecologically sound, and low-cost building techniques. Taliesin is described, and the author shows how Wright tried to popularize his social program through organic architecture.

The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright And His Midwest Contemporaries Brooks, Norton, \$7.95. The author discusses the entire phenomenon of the Prairie School. Included among some twenty architects studied are Griffen, Purcell and Elmslie, Byrne, Drummond, Garden, Perkins and Maher. Includes drawing on much unpublished material and original documentation, as well as interviews with many of the architects.

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I N S I D E

Some Thoughts About Napkins

By JENNIFER CLEMENTS

SEEING A FINISHED BUILDING is rather like reading only the final pages of a novel. You skip the first 12 chapters. Unlike a book, however, the design process is rarely intended for the public eye, in fact it is often not even recorded at all. Early sketches and working models are generally tossed into the wastebasket.

Chapters 1 & 2 of the process, where the client unfolds his hopes and dreams, are irretrievably lost and forgotten. Chapter 3, however, where the architect scribbles his first ideas for the scheme on a napkin, just might have survived. This issue of the *Review* will concern itself with the napkins of architectural design, the devices an architect uses to translate his ideas into forms.

Do buildings that are designed with models look different from buildings that are designed with sketches? Do most architects design in three dimensions or two? The Beaux Arts School used plans and elevations as design tools whereas James Stirling professes to use axos and Charles Moore, models.

I have chosen ten architects, one critic and one historian to explore the topic. The architects interviewed represent both big and small local firms; those who are experienced as well as those who are relatively new at it; house designers in addition to the creators of big buildings. Jan Alff and I split the interviews and we found that the ten architects were remarkably generous with their time, photographs, drawings and information.

The production of design is an internalized process that most architects don't seem to think about. They just do it. Some architects design with words, relying on the pencils of their talented employees while others sketch the design diagrams themselves while waiting for the bus.

We found very different levels of regard for early design drawings and models. Some offices display these intermediate representations of their work with pride while others take care to destroy the early tools. Some are embarrassed about the style of their work while others see those evidences of process as valuable and beautiful. Some keep voluminous files; others keep only the legal documents. Models are obviously victims of time. They don't fit in file drawers and it's awfully hard to dust the trees.

Not surprisingly, younger offices tend to have more time to develop and treasure early drawings. Quality of work, however, seems to have nothing to do with the size of an office. A big, busy office is less likely to keep napkins but equally likely to use them.

Models don't necessarily produce cardboard-looking buildings that lack scale. Buildings designed with eye-level sketches aren't always more romantic and lacking in dynamic geometry. We offer an interesting array of opinions on this controversy rather than statistical results. More important, I think we offer a view of how ten architects go about designing. We learn that Louis Kahn threw out his yellow sketches while Hans Hollein kept every scrap. We learn that Bill Turnbull's office works out details with the contractor and that Warren Callister is left-handed. HOK does freehand working drawings, the Art Institute was Paffard Clay's living model and Henrik Bull's father was an illustrator. We read about some architects who are pro-models and other who prefer sketches. And we learn that napkins are indeed a preferred medium for capturing early ideas.

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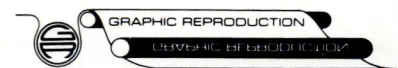
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