

# Frank Lloyd wright



Frank Lloyd Wright was a world-renowned architect who accomplished almost one thousand different works. His numerous buildings and homes he created can be seen all over the United States. One of his more famous homes was his own home of residency in Spring Green Wisconsin called Taliesin. He completed the home in 1911 and lived there for the next fifty years until his death. The home became famous because it was one of Wright's first works that showed the style of organic architecture, instead of his prairie style homes.

The concept of organic architecture meant to have a presence between land and material that became interdependent on each other. Frank Lloyd Wright expresses the presence of organic architecture in Taliesin by creating a continuous existence of nature within the home, shaping the structure to flow with the contours of its surroundings, and using every element, from the windows to the landscape, to reflect the symbolic order of organic architecture. As a boy Frank Lloyd Wright frequently visited the site that Taliesin rests on today because it is a 200-acre farm that his aunts owned.

He learned to farm and most importantly build and design while spending many summer days there. The first thing he ever constructed and designed was a tower with a windmill sitting on the top of it. When it came down to building Taliesin Wright knew exactly where to build the home since he knew the land so well. He decided to build on one of the hills overlooking the huge valley. He did not want to build on top of the hill because that would "destroy its integrity" instead he built on the side of it.

That is how Taliesin got its name because it means, " shining brow. " Wright said the whole concept for the house was that, " Taliesin was to be a complete living unit accomplishing everything from pig to property" (Menocal, 1992, pg. 11). The plan of the house was not made in any formal or abstract way. There is no symmetry to the house because each wing of the house is loosely organized and joined together in a pattern that seems to unwind itself around the hill. This was very unlike Wright's prairie style homes, which have a set order to things.

Taliesin has a very indistinct order because Wright felt he should follow the natural contours of the land. This follows through into the ceiling of the home since it is not flat using ninety degree angle from wall to ceiling instead it is slanted and flat in different areas to follow the silhouette of the slope in the hill. Wright said that Taliesin looked " homemade" since it was made out of rocks and tree of the region. The piers, chimneys, parapets, and lower walls are built of the local limestone that was quarried less than one mile away from the home.

The wall surfaces are stuccoed with yellowish sand from the nearby Wisconsin River and the roof is covered with shingles from the Cedar trees cut from off the property. Wright wanted to use the cedar shingles because he wanted them to weather in the way they would in nature. When it came to the stonework used throughout the home Wright made sure the pattern used was much like what you would find in nature. He scanned the hills in Wisconsin looking at the rocks jutting out in different directions. He used these images as a model for the stonework laid in Taliesin.

The stones were laid in what looked like a random pattern, not evenly spaced, and flat then raised in different places. When it came to the outside of the home and the land surrounding Taliesin Wright wanted every aspect of nature to be incorporated and blended together. At the edge of the U-shaped courtyard Wright designed a hillside garden to make a more gradual transition from the house to the land. From the courtyard you can see the open loggia that connects the living room to the studio. It allows the hill to penetrate directly through the home as to water would penetrate through areas of land.

Water happens to be a big part of the design of the home because it ties Taliesin into the environment. The East/West wing of the home is parallel to the Wisconsin River and the North/South wing is parallel to the lake and streams. Another way water ties in is the fact that Wright constructed a dam off one of the streams on the property. It created a waterfall creating hydraulic power, which powered parts of the home. Wright felt if he could use the land in every possible form to make the home "working unit" he did. That's why a large amount of the land was dedicated to agriculture.

There were plenty of vegetable gardens next to the home, an orchard, and pastures for different types of animals. Wright also connected the land to the home by taking into the consideration the roofline. The roofline looked like a continuous line that flowed with the shape of the hill; the West end of the roof sloped down almost to the ground. The cantilevered balcony stretched into the trees as though it was a branch connecting the trees to the home. While Wright designed the home he made sure not to disturb any of the trees by building around them.

He wanted the trees to emerge from the roofline as if they were growing from it. In the courtyard garden White Pine trees were planted so their branches would parallel the stonewall. When they were removed some years later it became immediately evident that they were apart of the design because the flow of the garden had changed. Wright took every aspect of nature into consideration when design the home. Wright even changed the entrance of the home when automobiles were made so the exhaust, dust, and noise wouldn't travel into the home penetrating it with its unnatural physique.

When you walk into the home you feel a sense of oneness with the land because you have a feeling of being outside wherever you go. In every room you can see the gardens and valley views from the large windows and full-length glass doors. The living room is a main centerpiece of the home tying the whole home together. It has the largest and best views of the large valley. The fireplace and bookshelf at the back of the room are slightly curved to match the exact turn the Wisconsin River makes. Wright felt that Taliesin was not an imageable place but the views from the inside were what he wanted people to remember. Taliesin is structurally asymmetrical and discontinuous but if you look at the house and the hill together they seem to have a marriage of architecture and nature that are completely interdependent on each other. Wright stated that he intended Taliesin to be, " a natural house, not as caves and log-cabins were natural but native in spirit and making" (Menocal, 1992, pg. 16), which he most certainly accomplished with his style of organic architecture.

The way Frank Lloyd Wright paid attention to every aspect of nature while designing his Taliesin home sparked the eye of many architects. He has influenced the way other architects, including myself, look at design and has inspired many of their designs. He influenced my own view on architecture and why I wanted to be one. I hope to make some contribution to the architecture world, whether it be influencing a child to become an architect or become a famous worldwide as Frank Lloyd Wright has done.