

Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

Recommended Guidelines for Projects Involving Unbuilt or Reconstructed Works designed by Frank Lloyd Wright

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While contemporary architectural designs by others inspired by the work Frank Lloyd Wright created during his lifetime continue to broaden his legacy, newly constructed or reconstructed projects which are based on designs, sketches, working drawings, and/or photographs of Wright's work cannot faithfully represent the intentions of Wright himself.

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation maintains that the contemporary construction or reconstruction of any architectural projects based on photographs or completed working drawings of Frank Lloyd Wright, or works based on the conceptual designs of Wright's work (collectively to be known as "Unbuilt Projects"), will necessarily require varying degrees of interpretation as to how Wright would himself have constructed the project, or used materials now available for such works, in today's building environment. Historically, the process of construction of his many built works was typically facilitated by his own on-site representatives so as to ensure conformity to working drawings and their intentions. This is of course not possible today.

Therefore, if such work on an Unbuilt Project is undertaken, the Foundation provides the following guidance to avoid misrepresentation of Wright's unique and invaluable legacy, and to minimize the risk that the public may not gain a full appreciation of Wright's work. This guidance should be incorporated into project planning, and disclosures associated with this guidance be established as part of a permanent public record of the project. In order to avoid such interpretations being falsely perceived as Wright's own expression of material, structure, or place, rather than as the expressions of those who create the Unbuilt Projects, we provide the following guidelines:

Transparency of the Work

It is critical for the public to understand that final design, construction, and/or reconstruction of any Unbuilt Project was not supervised by Wright, and that while such Unbuilt Projects may be based primarily on Wright's plans, drawings, photographs, etc. ("Documentation") they may also unavoidably depart in significant ways from Wright's intentions. Accordingly, the Foundation recommends that work based on such Documentation be undertaken with transparency, based on these guidelines:

- Activities connected with the Unbuilt Project, including construction and fundraising, should not be described as relating to a Frank Lloyd Wright work; but rather be denominated as work "based on a Frank Lloyd Wright design."
- For activities associated with any Unbuilt Project, the project owner should permanently identify the specific site/location for which the design was originally created and the original project name (e.g., based on the Jesse Franklin House for Louisville, KY).
- For reconstructed work, the project owner should identify the Unbuilt Project as a reconstruction, including the dates of building and demolition of the original work. When possible, the circumstances giving rise to the history and demolition of the original building should also be made available on site.

- Describe the Documentation that forms the basis for the Unbuilt Project (e.g., based on an original set of working drawings produced under Wright’s direct supervision and a revised contemporary set of working drawings by others as needed), and provide images of all available Documentation to interested parties. The Foundation prefers that images of Documentation be available for examination at the site where the Unbuilt Project is constructed. Much of this documentation may be obtained from the Avery Architectural Library at Columbia University (wrightarchives@columbia.edu).
- The name of the contemporary architect responsible for creating final drawings used in construction or reconstruction of the Unbuilt Project should be readily and permanently identifiable at the site of the finished building.

Authenticity of the Work

Nearly every one of Wright’s works was designed for a specific site, with a particular orientation to landscape and other natural elements of the site; and for the use of specific materials. Soil, sand, natural stones, or other materials of local origin were often incorporated into the final project; and specific materials available in Wright’s time were frequently key elements of his design. Therefore, any variation from the original site and original materials associated with an Unbuilt Project represents a material variation from Wright’s work. Accordingly, the Foundation recommends that a project based on Documentation as described above faithfully address questions of authenticity through the following guidelines.

- For both unbuilt and reconstructed work, it is imperative that the project owner distinguish between elements that are authentic Frank Lloyd Wright mandates and elements that are added, omitted, or substituted in the final construction of the Unbuilt Work. The project owner should permanently provide documentation at the site to advise of the public of departures from the original plans and the reasons therefor, including:
 - Changes to materials from original concept to finished product. This includes modifications such as reinforcement, use of engineered materials instead of natural materials, etc.
 - Changes driven by contemporary building codes.
 - Changes to siting—topography, viewshed, light, and relationship to the landscape. When there is a material difference between the site for which the structure was originally designed and the site where it is built, these differences must be called out to the public. The site where an Unbuilt Project is constructed should replicate as much as feasible the design’s relation to the relevant topographic features, grading, landscape design, and solar orientation of the original site at both near and far scales.

Other considerations, as set forth by the Society of Architectural Historians in their *Position Statement on the Reconstruction of Lost Buildings and the Construction of Unbuilt Designs*, may also bear on the question of construction or reconstruction of such works. These include:

- Creating a false sense of history through such construction;
- Redirecting resources for historic preservation from existing works in need of support; and,
- Supporting the creation of new works by contemporary architects and designers

Intellectual Property Concerns

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation was established by Wright in 1940 and was the principal beneficiary of his Last Will and Testament. The Foundation owns Wright's intellectual property, including copyrights and trademarks; rights of publicity associated with his name, likeness, and image; and other associated rights. The Foundation does not permit the use of its intellectual property in connection with the construction of Unbuilt Projects to inaccurately suggest that a structure or design was realized under Wright's supervision or was approved by the Foundation. The Foundation reserves all legal rights for violations of intellectual property and other laws.