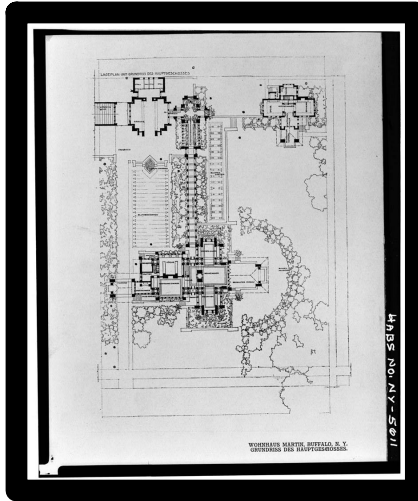




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The Buffalo News Articles regarding:

Darwin D. Martin House Complex and the works of Frank Lloyd Wright



THE BUFFALO NEWS
Where life unfolds daily

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Rare beehive kiln is busy with Martin House contract

By MARK SOMMER

News Staff Reporter

10/14/2006

The use of beehive kilns to make bricks is about as common today as the beehive hairdo. Luckily for the Martin House Complex restoration, the 121-year-old Belden Brick Co. of Canton, Ohio, still uses the outdated labor- and energy-intensive process. Proponents insist that the blends and colors cannot be replicated in the modern tunnel kilns of today.

The family-owned brick company was selected to closely match the original golden color and slender size of the bricks for the complex's reconstructed carriage house, pergola and conservatory, but only after an eight-year search that included approaching manufacturers across the Atlantic. The beehive process was used when the original bricks were made by the long-defunct Fallston Fire Clay Co. in Fallston, Pa. Belden Brick Co. is one of only three companies in the United States that still use that style of kiln.

"We feel like we've had a lot to do with making the Darwin Martin House a beautiful lady once again. She's pretty much ready to go to the dance, and we're very proud," said Mark Britko, Belden's general sales manager.

Britko was first contacted in 1996 by restoration architect Ted Lownie of Hamilton Houston Lownie Architects. The company produced sample fire clay and shale bricks that Lownie said were close in color. But leaving no brick unturned, Martin House Restoration Corp. continued its search elsewhere.

Manufacturers were approached without success in the Northwest and the Southwest, western Canada, and as far away as Britain, Spain and Belgium, Lownie said.

Eventually, Belden was invited to try again. This time, with a new plant able to boost its production capabilities and reduce back orders, the timing proved right.

"They produced a brick that everyone agreed was going to be satisfactory both in terms of size and color. I think the result is wonderful," Lownie said.

The brick selection for the National Historic Landmark had to satisfy the rigorous standards of the U.S. Department of the Interior and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

The reconstructed buildings will have 90,000 Roman bricks from Belden Brick when finished, along with about 100,000 common red bricks obtained elsewhere for masonry purposes, according to Larry Izydorczak, president of John H. Black Co. in Clarence, which hand-cut them.

Exact replicas were intentionally not sought, Lownie said, so the public would know decades from now that the reconstructed buildings were not originals.

The project's attention to detail included replicating the two types of mortar that architect Frank Lloyd Wright used to emphasize the brick's recessed horizontal joints and appearance of a straight line.

Reproduction of Wright's famous art glass windows will be on display at dedication of Martin House

By TOM BUCKHAM
News Staff Reporter
10/3/2006



Bill Wippert/Buffalo News

Buffalo News Publisher Stanford Lipsey shows a reproduction of the Tree of Life window at the Darwin Martin Carriage House, part of a display Lipsey and his wife, Judith, donated. Wednesday is the dedication of the "lost buildings" in the Martin House Complex.

Of the 394 art glass windows that accented the completed Darwin Martin House a century ago, none was more intricate or has grown more famous over the years than the Tree of Life. Created by Frank Lloyd Wright for the mansion's second-floor bedrooms and first-floor reception room, this vertical pattern with iridescent and opalescent green, brown, yellow and gold pieces ingeniously complemented the mansion's interior earth tones, and served as prisms through which those inside viewed the passage of daylight and the seasons. Shifting light conditions activated various colors, producing harmony between the materials and the cycles of nature.

The Darwin Martin House windows, which contain 11 different patterns including the Tree of Life, have gone into many locales, said Mary F. Roberts, chief operating officer of the Martin House Restoration Corporation.

"Over the years some windows were given away, some were sold by the descendants, some were literally put at the curb," Roberts said. "Some went into private collections and to museums all around the world. They've had a varied path.

"But we also own a large number that are now in storage and meant to be kept out of harm's way while the frames are restored," she said.

During Wednesday's dedication of the "lost buildings" in the Martin House Complex on Jewett Parkway, Wright's Tree of Life design will be seen in a new light.

As Gov. George E. Pataki and other guests step into the carriage house, they will encounter a display donated by Buffalo News Publisher Stanford Lipsey and his wife, Judith, that includes a replica Tree of Life window and, directly behind it, a frosted glass panel on which many of the brass strips and glass pieces for a Tree of Life window are shown in an "exploded" pattern - as they might have been laid out by craftsmen prior to assembly.

Though this particular art glass design is considered Wright's best-known, it has never been reproduced until now, said Eric Jackson-Forsberg, associate curator of the Martin House Restoration Corp.

"We've had other kinds of windows made, but this is the first Tree of Life," he said.

The individual pieces of colored glass in these windows are surrounded by metal strips called came, or coming, which are then soldered together and fitted into metal frames, which in the Martin House are brass.

The sheer number of individual pieces of glass - more than 750 per window - and the painstaking work that went into assembling them inspired the Lipseys to commission the exhibit.

It will be unlike any other in the nation's vast realm of restored and recreated Wright works, said Paul Phelps of Oakbrook Esser Studios in Oconomowoc, Wis. Licensed by the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation to restore or replicate the architect's art glass designs, Oakbrook Esser produced both pieces for the Martin House Restoration Corp.

The Tree of Life display room and explanatory graphics were designed by Hadley Exhibits of Buffalo.

"It's going to be something special. It has a real architectural and dimensional quality," Phelps said.

It took craftsmen at Chicago's Linden Glass Co., which tackled the Martin House challenge a century ago, 300 hours or more to produce each of the nearly 400 panels, which the architect called light screens, Phelps said. The order included 60 Tree of Life windows and doors, about half of which remain.

"Depending on the size and complexity, I think a current Tree of Life window costs in excess of \$20,000," Roberts said.

Most tourists passing the windows can easily identify the pattern: a base or "pot" from which a central axis or "trunk" extends to an upper "branch" configuration of chevrons. Wright set the windows in a continuous band around the second floor and the downstairs reception room to simulate a "grove" of abstract trees.

But the same tourists would have no idea how truly intricate the design is, Phelps said. Hence the interpretive display that will debut Wednesday.

"It will be really effective in showing the intensity and amount of work involved," he said. "It will help people look at these windows a little differently."

Wright designed more windows for the Martin House than any other building in his portfolio, including the other well known prairie houses.

"It was one of the most phenomenal uses of art glass ever," Phelps said. "The Martin House will truly be a worldwide draw."

"The idea of this exhibit is to appreciate the genius of Wright, and show exactly what people like Paul Phelps put into making these windows," Stanford Lipsey said.

The Lipseys earlier gave money to buy back the Gardener's Cottage at 285 Woodward Ave., the last of four residences Wright designed for the complex bounded by Jewett, Woodward and Summit Avenue, and paid for a new greenhouse to supply flowers for the buildings and grounds.

News reporter Paula Voell contributed to this report.

e-mail:

Architect Airs Views

10/03/2006

Toshiko Mori, architect of the planned Darwin Martin House Visitors Center, will present an illustrated lecture Wednesday at the University at Buffalo, as part of the 2006 lecture series presented by UB's School of Architecture and Planning.

Mori, chair and Robert P. Hubbard Professor in the Practice of Architecture at Harvard University School of Design, will speak at 5:30 p.m. in 301 Crosby Hall on UB's South Campus on Main Street.

She will discuss her current projects, including the Newspaper Cafe in the Jindon New District Architecture Park in Jinhua, China; residences in Connecticut and New York; and the Syracuse Center for Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems. The lecture is free and open to the public.

Buffalo's Wright Revival

10/1/2006



The decline of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Darwin Martin House Complex began after Martin's death in 1935. The architect's greatest "Prairie style" house and the other Wright-designed buildings on Jewett Parkway were neglected, razed or sold. A move to save the complex began in the 1970s and strengthened in the '90s when community leaders and preservationists started to pull together. Their efforts are coming to fruition as ceremonies Wednesday celebrate the restoration of the conservatory, carriage house and pergola. A special section in today's News tells the story.

For Western New York, a day to remember
By TOM BUCKHAM
NEWS STAFF REPORTER
10/1/2006

It may come to be known as the day Buffalo became a major player in architectural tourism. The guest list for Wednesday's dedication and private premiere of the "lost buildings" at the Darwin Martin House Complex certainly tells you the project is resonating far and wide. Gov. George E. Pataki will be on hand to celebrate the substantial completion of a long, complex and expensive project in which the state was a key partner. So will Bernadette Castro, commissioner of the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the agency that oversaw the work.

If Sens. Charles E. Schumer and Hillary Rodham Clinton attend as hoped, it will bring full circle the late Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan's early role in saving Frank Lloyd Wright's abandoned masterpiece.

Architect Eric Lloyd Wright and Darwin Martin Foster will honor their grandfathers by cutting a ribbon opening the newly replicated facilities - the pergola, conservatory and carriage house - as well as the gardener's cottage and new greenhouse.

Five speakers intimately involved in the restoration will acknowledge stakeholders.

Buffalo News Publisher Stanford Lipsey will laud key donors; Robert D. Gioia, president of the Darwin Martin House Restoration Corp., will recognize elected officials and the corporation board members; Robert J. Kresse, chairman and past president of the restoration group, will discuss the University at Buffalo's role in moving the project ahead; Charles W. Banta, a past Martin House president, will single out local and national foundations that contributed; and Howard Zemsky, immediate past president, will credit staff, volunteers, community members and the Wright and Martin families.

More than 300 guests are expected to attend the 3 p.m. program, far more than Darwin D. and Isabelle Martin invited to a formal reception on Nov. 16, 1906 - the coming out party for their new home.

The couple "gave a delightful reception last evening from 8 until 11 o'clock," the Buffalo Courier reported the following day. "The host and hostess received with Mr. Frank Lloyd Wright of Chicago. Chrysanthemums of many colors adorned the various rooms, pink ones being used in the receiving room, red flowers in the drawing room and yellow in the library. Supper was served in the basement from a buffet table adorned with yellow and white chrysanthemums."

At Wednesday's ceremony, each guest will receive a commemorative copy of "Frank Lloyd Wright's Buffalo," the documentary produced by WNED-TV (Channel 17) for the Public Broadcasting System.

Toshiko Mori, who designed the yet-to-be-built Darwin Martin House Visitor Center, will lecture at 5:30 p.m. in the Crosby Hall auditorium on the University at Buffalo's South Campus on Main Street. The public is welcome.

The reconstructed buildings will open Thursday for tours by reservation, with regular tour hours expected to begin in November. For more information, call 856-3858; log on to Darwinmartinhouse.org; or e-mail

Curator looks back on the challenging Martin House journey

By JACK QUINAN

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

10/1/2006



Curator Jack Quinan.

When I arrived in Buffalo in 1975 to teach architectural history at the University at Buffalo, three of the six buildings that make up the Darwin Martin House Complex had been demolished, and the principal Martin residence was a sad spectacle of missing windows, crumbling concrete and deflecting eaves. Three small apartment buildings inserted into the site in the early 1960s seemed to make a mockery of Frank Lloyd Wright's most famous building plan.

In 1976, word that the state Office of Mental Health might use the building as a halfway house sparked the concern of preservationists, but efforts made under UB Presidents Robert Ketter and Steven Sample over a period of 15 years were frustrated; historic building preservation, understandably, is not part of the mission of the State University of New York.

In 1982, the Wright-Martin Papers, a vast collection of letters, drawings, photographs and related documents pertaining to the design and construction of the Martin House, were jointly acquired by UB and Stanford University. This material provided unique insights into the social life of the Martins and into Wright's business practices, compounded the historical value of the Martin House and provided both the impetus and the means to accurately restore the buildings.

In 1991, William Greiner, as provost of UB, set in motion the forces that formed the Martin House Restoration Corp. in partnership with the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; fundraising began; and fortuitous circumstances enabled the restoration corporation to expand its vision from the Martin residence to the full six-building complex.

Today, the Barton House and gardener's cottage have been acquired; the 1960s apartment buildings are demolished; and the missing pergola, conservatory and garage-stable buildings have been reconstructed on the site.

I have been involved in the project for 31 years as a Wright scholar, curator and author of books on the Martin House and on Wright's Larkin Administration Building. And it is enormously gratifying for a number of reasons. Only now is it possible to appreciate the power of the narrative that Wright created for Darwin Martin in the form of the long view from the entrance to the main house to the Nike of Samothrace at the end of the pergola-conservatory axis, the story of Martin's life told architecturally.

Only rarely did Wright have the opportunity to give full expression to space, structure and the harmonious design of both the interior and the landscape of a commission of this size. The house is very complex, but it rewards careful scrutiny with a wealth of discoveries.

Only rarely in the entire history of architecture has a major building been so meticulously documented, a condition that today enables us to understand the house as the product of human interaction, a weaving together of many stories rather than a modernist abstraction.

The project is also gratifying because it has brought together an extraordinary group of people - board members, political figures, foundations, neighbors, students and an army of selfless volunteers - who have come to recognize the importance of the Martin House in the history of architecture and to the future of the City of Buffalo.

That, for me, is the best part.

Jack Quinan is a Wright scholar and curator of the Darwin Martin House. He is also a professor at the University at Buffalo and the author of "Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House: Architecture as Portraiture."

The restoration was realized through dedication, work and money

By MARK SOMMER

NEWS STAFF REPORTER

10/1/2006



Derek Gee/Buffalo News

Workers install the window frames on the east side of the conservatory at the Martin House Complex.

Preservationists labored for years to return Frank Lloyd Wright's deteriorating Darwin D. Martin House to its place of pre-eminence.

In the 1970s, individuals and organizations began writing legislators, raising funds for repairs and landscape improvements, meeting in small committees and giving tours of the house, all with the hope of

someday seeing the historic landmark restored.

Jason Aronoff - whose long involvement began with the Western New York Chapter of Society of Architects and Historians, and a committee set up at the University at Buffalo, the structure's owner - said the reconstruction now under way at the Martin House Complex goes beyond what anyone in those early days dared to dream.

"When we first started talking about it, the idea that the whole complex could be reassembled was not even really thinkable. Our concern was with the Martin House itself," said Aronoff, a Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda school psychologist.

"What we're seeing now - well, the word 'breathtaking' is used too often, but when you see the whole thing it really is."

The late Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan credited a letter from Aronoff, then chairman of the Landmark Society of the Niagara Frontier's Martin House Task Force, for bringing the structure's deteriorating condition to his attention.

In March 1991, the senator wrote in The Buffalo News that he had found the Jewett Parkway house on a recent visit to be "a ruin and a disgrace." He urged people to get involved in its preservation and promised he would do the same.

Moynihan's reaction had a galvanizing effect, attracting people with considerable political and financial clout to the cause.

Later that year, Julia Stokes, deputy parks commissioner, and then-UB Provost William Greiner invited a small group of people to the Martin House to report on the building's condition.

This marked its introduction to Robert J. Kresse, an attorney and trustee for the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation who would become a central figure in the building's rebirth.

"The message was the state can't [save the house]; UB can't do it; and we have to turn to the people themselves," recalled Kresse, the Martin House Restoration Corp.'s first president and longtime chairman.

That meeting would be the catalyst for forming the nonprofit organization, to which UB would later lease the Martin House to guide the restoration.

The group had its work cut out. The conservatory, pergola and carriage house had been torn down and replaced by apartments, and the Barton House and gardeners cottage were in private hands.

But first and foremost, the Martin House itself needed extensive work.

"The house was in deplorable shape, seriously bad shape," recalled Stanford Lipsey, publisher of The Buffalo News and a founding board member of the Martin House Restoration Corp., who was instrumental behind the scenes in securing funds and promoting Wright's legacy.

Lending credence to the effort was a two-day Darwin D. Martin House Scholars' Conference in Buffalo. Underwritten by The News, it drew Wright experts from around the world to discuss the house's restoration and how the city could capitalize on cultural tourism.

Then, in short order, two opportunities presented themselves that opened up the possibility of reassembling Wright's original vision.

The private owner of the George Barton House, located on the grounds, was preparing to sell the building to Harvard University when Lipsey got wind of it.

"I called Bob Rich [of Rich Products] and Bob Wilmers [of M&T Bank] and said they want \$400,000 for the house; let's each of us put in \$133,000 to buy it while we can lay our hands on it, and they did," Lipsey said.

"If you want to talk about a turning point, that was it."

When the organization learned soon after that the owner of three apartment buildings built on the property in the 1960s was planning to convert them into condominiums, the Barton House mortgage was used to secure funds to buy the rest of the property.

With that acquisition, the group now had control of the entire original property, and planning began on how to restore the Martin House Complex to its original glory.

Under the guidance of Kresse and then of Charles W. Banta and Howard Zemsky, successive presidents of the organization, an ambitious capital fundraising campaign, plus local, state and federal funds, and foundation support assembled \$35 million for what is expected to be a \$50 million project.

In 2003, Wilmers provided a personal challenge grant of \$1 million providing that 500 first-time contributors agreed to give \$5,000 each.

"I would say this is the absolute best fundraising effort that's ever occurred in Buffalo," Lipsey said.

Mary Roberts, the Martin House Restoration Corp.'s chief operating officer and successor to John C. Courtin, who left in 2006, said the success in fundraising underscores the community's involvement.

"This project stands on the shoulders of many, many volunteers, from the board of directors to the tour guides," said Roberts.

"We have over 350 active volunteers, and there are countless others who have been involved historically in one way or another. So many people could stand up and take a bow. It would be a very crowded stage."

Kresse agreed. "It's said that Buffalo is a City of Good Neighbors, and in fact it is. This project could not have happened otherwise."

This year, Lipsey and his wife, Judith, paid \$500,000 for the Wright-designed gardener's cottage and about \$150,000 to construct a greenhouse that Wright did not design but that Martin had put in.

Still to come is the completion of the Martin House itself, including the return of the art glass windows and furnishings, and the new Garden Pavilion visitors center to be designed by Toshiko Mori. Still, with the buildings reconstructed, the day when the entire project is completed draws nearer.

"This is the largest restoration of any Frank Lloyd Wright building in the world. We're talking superlatives that nobody else can claim," said Lipsey, who was named in July to head a board overseeing the restoration of another great example of Buffalo architecture, the historic H.H. Richardson Complex.

Zemsky, who served as the Martin House organization's president from 2001 through 2005, said he was most proud that the restoration effort never cut corners.

"Throughout this project, we never wavered on the standards of quality we envisioned, so it's really gratifying to see it happen at the level we always imagined," Zemsky said.

Added Banta, president of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, "It's a real badge of honor to have something of such international significance restored."

Gov. George E. Pataki, who put his support behind \$7 million for the Martin House restoration earlier this year, told The News that the completion of this project will pay big dividends for Buffalo.

"One of the great elements of Buffalo is its tremendous architectural history. When you combine the Darwin Martin with the Richardson Complex, combine it with the Olmsted parks, . . . you're going to see a lot of people just coming to visit Western New York because of the architecture and the arts," Pataki predicted.

Architect Eric Lloyd Wright, Frank Lloyd Wright's grandson and former apprentice who lives in Malibu, Calif., said he was grateful to the people of Buffalo.

"They've done a remarkable job in restoring and bringing it back, so the public can see what a great work it is," Wright said.

Wright's brilliance as architect grew over time

10/1/2006

When the Darwin D. Martin House was completed in 1905, local publications had a field day with Frank Lloyd Wright's creation.

The Buffalo Illustrated Express referred to it as both a "Jules Verne house" and "Chinese puzzle," while another publication dismissed it as a "freak house."

Although history's verdict is far different today, it's easy to see why such views were rendered. Wright's organically designed, Midwestern-influenced Prairie house - with its linear, low-to-the-ground appearance, intersecting planes, flowing interior and art glass windows - stood in stark contrast to the stately Victorians of Buffalo's Parkside neighborhood.

The house was no less out of place than its up-and-coming, 35-year-old Oak Park, Ill., architect, who was bursting with new ideas.

Choosing Wright was a gamble for Martin, a wealthy man who became a devoted friend to the man who would later be called America's greatest architect and brought him some of his greatest commissions.

Thanks to Martin, Wright was assigned his first large commercial project, the acclaimed Larkin Administration Building, designed in 1904 and built on Seneca Street in 1906.

Martin was a top executive of the Larkin Soap Company, a mail-order business that, like Buffalo, reached its zenith in the early 20th century. When he and his wife, Isabelle, sought an architect for their home, they turned to the Chicago-based Wright at the suggestion of Martin's brother, William.

He was first hired to design a home for Martin's sister Delta and her husband, George Barton, a stone's throw from where his house would be built.

The Martin House began in 1903 and was substantially finished two years later at a cost five times greater than Wright's estimate. Along with the Martin and Barton houses were a gardener's cottage, carriage house, pergola and conservatory. A greenhouse was added later.

The Martins also asked Wright to build a summer home on the lakeshore in Derby that came to be known as Graycliff. Like the Martin House Complex, it too, is now under reconstruction.

Eric Lloyd Wright apprenticed as an architect with his grandfather, Frank Lloyd Wright, and recalled him speaking warmly about Martin.

"I heard him a couple of times talk about Mr. Martin, and he always considered him as one of his finest and closest clients," Wright said from his studio in Malibu, Calif.

When the reconstructed buildings are completed, it will mark the first time in more than 40 years that the entire Martin House Complex will be seen together.

Today, the comments that praise what Wright created more than 100 years ago are far different than the descriptions heard at its opening.

"The Darwin Martin House complex is without question the greatest of Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie Period houses - and arguably, the greatest house of his entire career, bar none," said Robert McCarter, professor of architecture at the University of Florida and the author of six books on Wright.

Buffalo State art historian Francis Kowsky predicts big dividends for Buffalo with the long-sought completion of the Martin House Complex.

"In terms of architectural history, I think it's the most important house in New York State. The restoration is going to be a great plus for the city and certainly raise its profile in the art world," Kowsky said.

- Mark Sommer

Depression, Martin's death led to neglect



10/1/2006

Harry Scull/Buffalo News

More work is planned on the exterior of the Darwin Martin House.

Declining health and financial fallout from the Great Depression had a debilitating effect on Darwin D. Martin and his Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house.

Martin died in 1935, and his wife left the house

the following year. The property sat vacant until it was acquired by the City of Buffalo in a tax foreclosure in 1946.

Sebastian Tauriello, an architect, purchased it in 1955. He sold off part of the land, resulting in the 1960 demolition of the carriage house, pergola, conservatory and greenhouse and their replacement by three apartment buildings.

The University at Buffalo purchased the house in 1966, and had stewardship over the declining masterpiece into the mid-1990s. It was used first as a president's residence.

Martin Myerson, who lived in the Martin House from 1966 to 1970 as UB president, recalled it being "neglected," but said living there was like a dream come true.

"Frank Lloyd Wright was probably my favorite American architect, and the Martin House was one of the great treasures of American architecture," Myerson said. "We had a dream that maybe we could live [there], but I thought it would be utterly impossible."

Margie Myerson, Myerson's wife, said architecture fans would often make a pilgrimage to the house. "A class came down from Toronto, and we came out one morning and saw all these young people out there and thought we had a sit-in," Myerson laughed, recalling a time when the university was regularly confronted with student protests against the Vietnam War.

Eventually, grass-roots efforts by preservationists in the 1970s would lead to the formation of the Darwin Martin Restoration Corp. in 1992, which would spearhead the complex's renaissance.

- Mark Sommer

THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS OF THE DARWIN MARTIN HOUSE COMPLEX

With the restoration of the Pergola, Conservatory and the Carriage House, Frank Lloyd Wright's visionary project in Buffalo will be celebrated by architecture lovers everywhere

10/1/2006

1) The Darwin Martin House

Perhaps Frank Lloyd Wright's greatest "Prairie style" house and the creation he called his opus. Darwin D. and Isabelle Martin's house was substantially finished in 1905.

2) The Gardener's Cottage

First discussed in 1905, it was the last of six Wright structures added to the complex, in 1909.

3) The Greenhouse

An entirely new addition to the complex, it is a bit smaller than Martin's commercial greenhouse but will also supply flowers and plants for the entire property.

4) The Carriage House

Another long-missing feature brought back to life from Wright's blueprint. It has a garage with a chauffeur's apartment above and a stable to the rear.

5) The Conservatory

One of three demolished structures resurrected under the restoration plan. Martin deemed this gem too small for a year-round "growing house" and added a commercial greenhouse without Wright's approval.

6) The Pergola

This new structure replicates the elegant enclosed walkway that was the north-south spine of Wright's cross-axial design; it connects the main house with the Conservatory and Carriage House. The original was razed years ago.

7) The Barton House

Designed for Martin's sister, Delta, and her husband, this was Wright's first Buffalo building to be completed, in 1904.

8) Floricycle

A semicircular flower bed bordering Summit Avenue completed the Martin House's lateral axis and was meant to contain plants that bloomed successively through the growing season.

9) The Visitors Center

This low-profile \$7 million structure designed by Toshiko Mori will be built to the west of the Martin House; it will be the last addition to the complex's footprint.

Credit: Hamilton Houston Lownie Architects, LLC

Intersection of two great men's lives was fruitful

10/1/2006

They grew up under trying circumstances half a continent apart, but through self-motivation and talent became eminently successful men.

After crossing paths in 1902, Frank Lloyd Wright and Darwin D. Martin, then in their 30s, molded a partnership that lasted more than three decades and produced much of the surviving early-20th century architecture - foremost the Darwin Martin House - that is expected to make Buffalo a must-see heritage tourism destination.

"It was a long run," said Jack Quinan, a University at Buffalo art history professor who may know more than anybody else about the fruitful but difficult relationship between the genius architect and his greatest patron.

Short and sickly, Darwin displayed an intelligence that would make him wealthy beyond his dreams.

The door opened when he left home to work with his oldest brother "slinging soap" for Buffalo's Larkin Co. on the East Coast. Founder John D. Larkin soon brought 14-year-old Darwin to Buffalo as a clerk. A year later, Larkin told him: "You're my bookkeeper."

Martin flourished under Elbert Hubbard, founder of the Roycrofters Arts and Crafts colony in East Aurora.

After studying engineering for a short while in college, Wright in 1887 was hired as a draftsman in the firm of Adler and Sullivan, run by Louis Sullivan, who designed Buffalo's Guaranty Building. Wright eventually became chief draftsman.

Wright was fired after Sullivan found out his protegee was designing houses in violation of the firm's policy against moonlighting.

By the time Martin went to Chicago in September 1902 to visit Larkin's western headquarters and help his brother, William, find a place to build a new home, 49 Wright buildings had been erected.

In November, Wright rode a train for Buffalo to meet with Martin and other Larkin executives. The visit eventually yielded more than 40 commissions, 11 of which were built, including the Larkin Administration Building, the Martin House complex, Heath House and Graycliff.

It also kindled Wright's friendship with Martin, from whom the architect derived, "the financial and moral support that sustained him through some of the most difficult stretches of his career,"

as Quinan noted in his 2004 history, "Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House: Architecture as Portraiture."

Yet the relationship between these accomplished men had a dark side: Wright, a larger-than-life manipulator who knew how to exploit weakness, versus the compliant Martin, who opened his checkbook whenever the spendthrift architect needed bailing out.

The final cost of the six-building Martin Complex was certainly well over budget. By 1916, Wright was \$30,000 in debt to Martin and still "playing him for every penny," Quinan said. By the time Martin and his wife, Isabelle, hired him to design the summer home for the family in Derby, the architect had reached his personal and professional nadir. The commission sustained his career.

But the favor was never returned. Soon after the Martins occupied Graycliff in 1928, Martin suffered the first in a series of six strokes, and the family lost its fortune in the Great Depression. Two years after her husband died, a penniless Isabelle abandoned the Martin House.

- Tom Buckham

Martin, Wright exchanged many letters

10/1/2006

The Darwin Martin House evolved from a rough sketch included in a two-page, typewritten letter from Frank Lloyd Wright to Darwin Martin in May 1903 - one of hundreds of items in the University at Buffalo archives that offer extraordinary insight into the often prickly relationship between the men.

Wright pointed out that the corner lot Martin had secured for his residential complex at Jewett Parkway and Summit Avenue was not square. The parcel met the intersection at a pinched angle southeast of the George Barton House, which was already being built.

Would Martin object, Wright asked, "to squaring your building with the Barton's. Disregarding the Jewett Avenue frontage as far as a parallel is concerned. (?)"

Though neighboring homes were parallel to the curb, "I think it is important that the Barton House and your own stand square with regard to each other, leaving square angles in the court between, barn and all," he wrote.

When Martin, who had fumed over the high cost of the Barton House, saw Wright's 5,400-square-foot preliminary plan for the Martin House in late 1903, he demanded downsizing.

"The house we live in covers 1100 sq. ft.," he wrote to Wright. "You remember the Swede who missed the ferry boat by 20 ft. He said he could have made it in 'two yumps.' From 1100 to 5400 ft. is too much for one yump. You will have to build us an intermediate house of say 3000 sq. ft." As usual Wright held his ground, telling Martin: ". . . if we are going to realize the home you are entitled to and ought to have you will have to 'ring off' on the square foot business and comparisons with anything in previous existence."

As the grand plan was fine-tuned, the architect was peppered with letters expressing alarm over the project's soaring cost.

"We may be able to put up the buildings for \$14,000, but I do not know how to get out of it now," the client fretted in May 1904 regarding the garage-stable and conservatory.

Martin thus "set the tone of reckless abandon that would characterize his financial dealings with Wright throughout the project and for many years thereafter," Jack Quinan, a University at

Buffalo art history professor, observed in his 2004 book, "Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House: Architecture as Portraiture."

As construction of the complex was about to begin in August 1904, Martin quizzed Wright on the item-by-item details, and Wright replied by subtly attempting to double the budget.

"You ought to spend \$75,000 on it instead of \$40,000 just to leave Buffalo something worth having, something to live up to, you know," he wrote.

Martin fired back: "Have you any idea by this time how exceedingly aggravating it is to a client to have to tease and coax and wheedle for past due details? For details that obviously require only concentrated industry, not courting of the Muse, to produce. You do not have to court a Muse to produce detail for our stable door. We want to hang the doors soon and we don't want to wait much longer for brains. ..."

Although the project's cost was millions in today's dollars, Wright continually cried poor - and never hesitated to pester his leading patron for more. During a May 1906 visit to Buffalo, he asked for \$1,200.

"My conscience does not . . . smite me a mite," Martin wrote 12 days later, "in saying that if One Thousand Dollars spot cash will bring from you a receipt in full of all demands including the future things that may be considered necessary accessories to the buildings already built and planned, I will scare up the money and send it to you."

Wright, confident of his ability to sway Martin, replied: "You are incorrigible, - but I love you just the same. Send the money."

- Tom Buckham

Buffalo's treasure trove of architectural gems

10/1/2006



Buffalo News staff photos

Buffalo's architectural masterpieces include the Central Terminal, above, the H.H. Richardson Complex, far left, and Lois Sullivan's Guaranty Building.



Buffalo's reputation as a great city for architecture will take a giant leap forward with the reconstruction of the Darwin Martin House.

The Frank Lloyd Wright-designed complex is widely considered by architectural scholars to be among his greatest residences, and with seven buildings it was the largest of the 60 Prairie houses Wright developed.

"You have one of the greatest of all Frank Lloyd Wright houses," Paul Goldberger, the dean of Parsons The New School for Design in New York City, and architecture critic for the New Yorker, told an audience at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in December 2003.

"I am continually amazed at the riches you have here, which make this one of the most compelling architectural cities on the continent."

The city's historic architecture and vibrant arts are now recognized by many as the key to reshaping Buffalo's Rust Belt image, enhancing the quality of life for those living here and luring cultural tourism.

Many of Buffalo's buildings were designed and built in the early part of the 20th century, when the city was still one of the nation's most prosperous. A large number were and continue to be threatened by neglect, prompting residents to try to save them from the wrecking ball.

In a city full of architectural gems, the Martin House is widely seen to be at the head of the pack along with former Wright mentor Louis Sullivan's Guaranty Building, one of the first skyscrapers, and Henry Hobson Richardson's Gothic Buffalo State Hospital.

Together they make Buffalo the only city outside of Chicago to boast the Big Three of early American modern architecture, with each architect represented by one of his greatest works. With \$76.5 million earmarked to restore and reuse the Richardson Complex, including making the building's signature twin towers into an architectural museum, and the Guaranty Building undergoing interior renovations under the stewardship of the Hodgson Russ law firm, the future for all three appears bright.

These buildings have considerable, critically acclaimed company. Among them are:

- Eliel and Eero Saarinen's Kleinhans Music Hall, one of the first significant 1920s era movie palaces.
 - George L. and C.W. Rapp's Shea's Performing Arts Center, one of the great movie palaces built when they were in their heyday.
 - Alfred Fellheimer and Steward Wagner's Central Terminal and John J. Wade's Buffalo City Hall, both widely viewed as art deco treasures.
 - And, among houses of worship, Blessed Trinity Church and St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral.
- Gilded Age grandeur can also be found in Buffalo's pre-eminent local architect E.B. Green and William Sydney Wicks' Goldome and Albright-Knox Art Gallery, August C. Esenwein and James A. Johnson's Electric Building and homes by Green and the firm of McKim, Mead and White along Delaware Avenue, known as Buffalo's "Millionaire's Row."

"It seems our architecture really resonates with visitors," said Ed Healy, a spokesman for the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau. "Invariably, people always remark on the beauty of Buffalo's architecture and the incredible collection of old buildings and character of our neighborhoods."

After a decades-long drought, new buildings are finally starting to make an impact, among them Mehrdad Yazdani's Hauptman-Woodward Institute's Structural Biology Research Center.

Toshiko Mori's eagerly anticipated Garden Pavilion visitors center at the Martin House Complex is expected to join their ranks and add to the city's architectural appeal.

- *Mark Sommer*

Down the road, a new visitors center

10/1/2006



News file photo

Harvard University's Toshiko Mori designed the Garden Pavillion visitors center for the Main House Complex. The architect's design has been praised for complementing Wright without slavishly imitating him.

While all eyes are on the reconstructed buildings at the Darwin D. Martin House complex, something wholly new on the site is also eagerly anticipated.

Toshiko Mori's unobtrusive and refined Garden Pavilion visitors center has raised expectations that it will become one of Buffalo's most important modern designs in decades. The design bested five Northeastern design firms in a competition, and its groundbreaking - which has been delayed due to funding - is hoped for as early as 2007.

Mark Mendell, a member of the selection committee and president of Cannon Design, an architectural and design firm in Grand Island, said at the time that Mori's 15,000-square-foot design worked best at the site.

"To do a building like this, we wanted to have a super talent who would take it on with great imagination and intensity.

"Her work exhibits tremendous refinement and sophistication that belies a technical ingenuity, and is executed in an almost effortless way," Mendell said.

The Garden Pavilion has been praised by critics for complementing and interpreting architect Frank Lloyd Wright without slavishly imitating him.

The Martin House Restoration Corp. has also been lauded for injecting new life into a hallowed, century-old project.

The visitors center will be marked by glass walls on three sides, a reinforced fiberglass roof with thin, sharp-edged roof line, transparent walls and a light court illuminated by a central sky light. Mori is chair of architecture at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, and heads her own New York City-based firm, Toshiko Mori Architect.

- Mark Sommer

Architect's view of the restoration

By TED LOWNIE

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

10/1/2006

Derek Gee/Buffalo News



Architect Ted Lownie takes State Parks Commissioner Bernadette Castro on a tour to check the progress of work on the Pergola.

We at Hamilton Houston Lownie Architects began our work on the Darwin Martin project with a small commission to restore a deteriorating living room skylight and bedroom terrace assembly. At the same time, the state commissioned a report to establish a restoration program based on a holistic analysis of the house. With the restoration guideline in hand, our real work began in 1992, when our small terrace commission was rolled into a larger house restoration project led by the State University Construction Fund, whose goal was the reconstruction of the roof, and removal of asbestos and lead paint.

The broad, double cantilevered roof was restored; its original horizontal eaves returned to their 1906-07 perfection.

Handmade terra cotta roof tiles were laboriously fabricated in Pontigny, France, at a 400-year-old, family-run company an hour south of Paris.

The restoration of the George Barton House roof followed immediately, utilizing identical construction techniques and materials to those employed at the Martin House.

The Martin House Restoration Corp. board, in concert with the state, had a magnificent vision that was not limited to restoration of the house. They would acquire all of the other properties from the 1906 estate and remove three apartment buildings that were constructed in 1960 where Frank Lloyd Wright-designed buildings had stood. The corporation had already acquired the Barton House, designed by Wright for Martin's sister.

Complete reassembly of the Martin property occurred in 2006 with the purchase of the gardener's cottage. This remarkable achievement was propelled by the knowledge that a primary reason for the architectural greatness of Wright's work for the Martins lay in his masterful composition of five buildings and a rich landscape. This composition would remain unique in Wright's career, yet comprehension of it could only be truly understood if all the elements were in place.

Demolition of the three apartment houses was the priority as a precedent for rebuilding the pergola, conservatory and carriage house/barn.

We also undertook a meticulous excavation, led by project architect Jamie Robideau, at the site of the pergola and conservatory that yielded bits of stained glass from broken art glass windows, ceramic tile, limestone foundation stone, skylight glass, metal light fixture components and other building artifacts.

Perhaps the most valuable find was the ability to determine the precise location of the pergola, conservatory and carriage house, which were not given dimensions in Wright's original drawings.

Research continued on a host of questions relating to the original construction. While we had good original drawings, correspondence and early photographs from the UB archives, as well as the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation at Taliesin, every answer seemed to pose new questions. Chicago architect John Eifler helped with his knowledge of Wright-designed details at houses done concurrently in the Midwest. Robert Furhoff undertook painstaking analysis of the paint colors in every room of the house. We continued our quest for material fabricators, skilled artisans and crafts people who could supply material no longer manufactured or reconstruct precise replicas of elements not made in 100 years, such as the art glass windows set in brass comes.

We decided to "test the market" by organizing an exhibition that focused on the art glass windows designed for the Martin House. Since many of the originals had been sold years earlier, we needed to have reproductions made that would supplement the originals owned by the corporation.

To our great satisfaction, we discovered that near-perfect replicas were certainly possible, and a number were fabricated. We also learned that owners of windows for which the corporation possessed no example allowed theirs to be used as models.

None of the major materials used in the original construction, including brick, architectural concrete and ceramic tile, were currently being manufactured with the original characteristics, including colors and sizes. The concrete mix and original mortar formulas were also unknown but were discovered through analysis.

Finding sources for brick and tile was only successful when we learned what question to ask.

Initially, we shipped original bricks to manufacturers in North America and Europe and asked if

they could match them. The answer was often "yes," but samples would arrive that bore no resemblance to what we sent. Then we changed the question and instead asked if they had a facility with the capability of matching our brick, time and money aside.

Now when we got a "yes," it meant a willingness to engage in the research and development work that would result in a match that would not only satisfy us, but also our partners at the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the federal Department of the Interior.

The restoration/reconstruction of the Martin estate is nearly complete. For the first time, the public will be able to experience all the incredible spaces, forms and facets of one of architecture's most powerful compositions.

Local architect Ted Lownie is overseeing restoration of the Martin House Complex

More work to be done at the Martin House

10/1/2006

The Buffalo News

Recent news gives a reason to believe

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By Donn Esmonde - NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Despite gloomy skies, I felt happy the other day when I walked into the downtown coffee shop. Good things were happening. I was eager to share the news.

I found him in his usual spot, hunkered in a dark corner over a cold cup of **house** blend. His eyes were bleary, his hair a stranger to a comb, he wore a rumpled No Goal T-shirt.

Call him Buffalo Joe. He is our fictional Everyman, our skeptic, the imaginary symbol of our broken dreams and unfulfilled promises. Years of disappointment broke his spirit, left him convinced that nothing good can happen around here. He isn't real, but his "show-me" attitude infects our communal psyche.

"Joe, good news," I offered. "We're turning the ship around."

He raised a weary eye and shook his head. "Right," he replied. "And the ship is called the Titanic." I ignored the crack.

"The ribbon-cutting for Wright's **Darwin Martin** complex is this week," I said. "It will bring us tourists, Joe. Real tourists. And get this -- the NFTA is letting go of the waterfront. Fifty years of inertia will end."

Joe rubbed the Wide Right tattoo on his forearm and cackled.

"Don't you ever learn, bright eyes? I remember you running in here years ago, all hot about the Adelphia office tower."

I recoiled, stung by the memory of the Rigas fiasco. But times have changed.

"Joe, downtown housing is booming. Outside investors just paid millions for the tattered Statler and the vacant AM&A's. When was the last time we got out-of-town money in this town?"

He rolled his eyes, unimpressed.

"High taxes keep a boot heel on our necks," he said. "It scares off businesses, and no businesses mean no jobs. It won't change until Albany -- the Santaland of frills and giveaways -- changes its ways. What are the odds of hundreds of lobbyists and legislators finding religion?"

He had a point.

"OK, Albany is our Godzilla," I conceded. "But we're changing what we can around here. We didn't let the Power Authority play us for suckers, we arm-twisted \$300 million out of them for Niagara Falls' power. The Niagara Thruway toll booths will come down. The Sabres are talking Stanley Cup."

I thought I saw a flicker of hope in his eyes. But it was just a dying ember.

"Tell me about Bass Pro," he snickered. "The goalposts keep moving. First, they want a neighborhood built around the Aud. Then the proposed casino will supposedly reel them in. Now they want the Aud knocked down. What's the next request, gold-plated Cadillacs and lifetime passes to the circus?"

I couldn't argue. But Bass Pro or no, we'll move ahead. "Joe, look at Erie Canal Harbor," I said. "The historic Commercial Slip is unearthed and rewatered. Folks stop by to see it, even though there's only a faded signboard at the site."

He shrugged. "That's nice. But let's see if they spend the money to tell the story of what the place means. Otherwise, it's just a ditch."

He was jacked up on negative java. It was getting to me. "Joe, you gotta believe. Even you can see the progress."

He shook his head and smiled.

"I got two words for you, wise guy: Signature bridge."

The phrase hit me like a Mike Tyson roundhouse. I staggered back, grabbing a 50-gallon coffee urn to steady myself.

"Look, forget the bridge," I said. "We're repopulating downtown. We're ready to cash in on the heritage tourist trade. The waterfront spell is broken. What more do you want?"

He held up his coffee cup. "Get me a refill, willya?" he cracked. "And wake me when you stop dreaming."

"It's no dream this time, Joe," I told him, reaching for the empty cup. "Just wait and see."

VIPs help dedicate Martin Complex

Guests include Schumer, Pataki and Clinton

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By Tom Buckham - NEWS STAFF REPORTER

*Correction: Three reconstructed buildings in Frank Lloyd Wright's Darwin **Martin House** Complex are due to open for tours in mid-November. In the interim, final touches will be added to these "lost buildings" - the pergola, conservatory and carriage **house**. It was incorrectly reported Thursday that the structures are already open to the public. Tours of the **Martin House** and George Barton **House** are continuing. For information call 856-3858 or visit www.darwinmartinhouse.org. [originally published Friday, October 6, 2006]*

Illustration: Bill Wippert/Buffalo News

Guests get their first look at the reconstructed pergola and conservatory of the Darwin D. **Martin House** Complex on Jewett Parkway after Wednesday's ceremonies.

Bill Wippert/Buffalo News

Buffalo News Publisher Stanford Lipsey, left, offers thanks to Senators Charles E. Schumer and Hillary Rodham Clinton at Wednesday's dedication of the **Martin House** Complex.

On his first visit to the Darwin D. **Martin House**, long before he became a senator, Charles E. Schumer said he was startled to see three modern apartment buildings sitting smack in the middle of the Jewett Parkway property -- spoiling Frank Lloyd Wright's masterful design.

In his mind, he said, the intrusion of three "prosaic" 1960s structures on the landmark "prairie **house**" and other elements of Wright's 1904 plan was a metaphor for Buffalo's economic decline and the neglect of its many architectural treasures.

Schumer returned to the scene of the crime Wednesday with Gov. George E. Pataki and Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton to help celebrate a milestone in the long campaign to reverse that sad chapter in the city's architectural story: the dedication of three "lost buildings" in Frank Lloyd Wright's Darwin D. **Martin House** Complex. "It's a little bit cloudy, but this is one of the sunniest days Buffalo has had in a long time," Schumer told 300 invited guests seated under a tent on the freshly sodded lawn near the 100-foot-long pergola, a replica of the covered passageway that connected the **Martin House** with the conservatory and carriage **house** before all three were torn down in the 1960s.

The replacement buildings and a new greenhouse for the property were erected by the **Martin House** Restoration Corp. as part of a \$35 million effort to bring Wright's century-old plan back to life for the burgeoning cultural tourism market.

"This is not simply the restoration of a beautiful building," Schumer said, "it is the restoration of a city and its future. It's truly a magnificent turning point."

Clinton said the restoration is "a collaboration between all levels of government and the private sector" and commended Pataki and the state for contributing \$13 million.

She also reminded guests that the **Martin House** project received \$150,000 under the Save America's Treasures program that, while first lady, she had initiated in the 1990s to preserve places and artworks that embody "that special American spirit."

There is "not a more fitting project" in that category than the **Martin House**, added Clinton, who is working with Schumer to obtain another \$150,000 federal grant for continuing work on the George Barton **House**, one of three main structures in the historic complex on Jewett between Summit and Woodward avenues.

Such measures "honor the past and imagine the future -- and make that future come true," she said.

State Parks Commissioner Bernadette Castro, who steered state funding to the restoration group on Pataki's behalf, predicted the **Martin** Complex will soon begin welcoming a steady stream of scholars, writers and architecture buffs as well as tourists.

"The writing, the books, . . . it's just beginning," she predicted. "The world is about to rediscover Buffalo and the Darwin **Martin House**."

Castro said her office and Delaware North Cos. are "entering a formal agreement" to market the site to potential visitors.

"This is a remarkable day -- a historic moment for the people of Buffalo and Frank Lloyd Wright fans the world over," said master of ceremonies Stanford Lipsey.

Lipsey, publisher of The Buffalo News and vice president of the restoration group, reminded the audience that the **Martin House** project is the largest and costliest Wright restoration ever attempted.

Along with Louis Sullivan's Guaranty Building and Henry Hobson Richardson's soon-to-be-restored Buffalo Psychiatric Center towers, the **Martin House** Complex will give Buffalo "the largest collection of period architecture outside Chicago," one that will generate substantial tourism, Lipsey predicted.

"One big prize is yet to come," he said, referring to the visitors center designed by Toshiko Mori that will be built on the Woodward Avenue side of the property.

Pataki praised the restorers for realizing the project's potential to help their struggling city.

It is one thing to bask in "the grandeur of the past" but quite another "to build toward the future," Pataki said as a downpour interrupted the ceremony, soaking VIPs in the tent's front row.

Minutes later, the rain let up. Wright's grandson, architect Eric Lloyd Wright, and **Martin's** grandson, Darwin **Martin** Foster, snipped a symbolic red ribbon running the length of the pergola.

Guests began filing across temporary cardboard walkways to the replicated structures, where they sipped champagne and nibbled chocolate-covered strawberries as they looked through the pergola from the **Martin House** to the conservatory and studied an exhibit in the carriage **house** featuring a replica of Wright's famous Tree of Life window and an "exploded view" of the window's 750 individual pieces.

Tours of the "lost buildings," starting today, can be arranged by calling the **Martin House** Restoration Corp. at 856-3858.

Regular public hours will begin in mid-November.



e-mail: tbuckham@buffnews.com

e-mail: desmonde@buffnews.com

Derek Gee/Buffalo News

Open for Business

Unfinished fireplace in the reception room of the Darwin Martin house.

Visitors to the Darwin D. Martin House reception room this week will see earth-toned colored walls, Frank Lloyd Wright's "Tree of Life" art glass and furnishings the famed architect designed.

"It's a show room so that people can experience the sense of the house," said Margaret P. Stehlik, site administrator and volunteer director.

But even that room - the only one that appears close to completion in the house - shows how much remains to be done. The walls will have to be re-plastered and repainted. More original furnishings will need to be obtained. And the art glass - now represented by transparencies - will eventually be replaced by newly fabricated windows.

Robert D. Gioia, president of the Martin House Restoration Corp., said it was important for the project to first erect the reconstructed pergola, conservatory and carriage house before finishing the Martin House.

It's anticipated that the excitement the buildings generate will be a catalyst in raising \$15 million to complete the \$50 million project.

"I couldn't be more encouraged to see the progress, and to hear what people are saying about it nationally. This is a fabulous representation," Gioia said.

Exterior work on the 101-year-old building is slated to begin next year.

Phase IV of the restoration is expected to start in spring 2007 by giving a face lift to the building's degenerating brick and concrete work. In a typically Wrightian challenge, repointing will require two different types of colored mortar, one for application between the horizontal bricks, and the other for those laid-out vertically.

In addition, a band of windows on the south facade will be returned to their original position, a trunk room added by the Martin family will be removed, allowing every corner to again be cantilevered, and walls on the northern and the southern sides of the house will be pulled back to their original location.

Phase 5 will involve overhauling mechanical systems and introducing a heating and cooling system. That will be followed by interior painting, refabricating moldings and cabinetry work. The intricate glass mosaic tile patterns for the famed four-sided fireplace Wright designed in the central entrance will be recreated.

Work on the second floor will focus on restoring Wright's original floor plan that was altered by the Martins and a later owner. Restoration of the historic landscape will follow.

Meanwhile, acquisitions of furnishings and art glass windows are ongoing. Wright designed 55 pieces of furniture for the Martin House, including the metal firewood box and a circle-in-a-square table now in the reception room. Of those, 33 have been collected and stored in a state conservation facility.

The restoration corporation also has about half of Wright's 394 art glass windows in its possession.

Furnishings and art glass windows not recovered would be replicated, Stehlik said.

- Mark Sommer

Historic landmark has endured more than 100 years

10/1/2006



Photo courtesy of the University Archives, University at Buffalo
Family photo taken on the Martin House Complex grounds in 1906.



Derek Gee/Buffalo News
Architect Toshiko Mori designed the visitors center.



Photos by Derek Gee and Harry Scull Jr./Buffalo News

The restoration project went from demolition to meticulous rebuilding at the Martin House Complex.



Over the years, Darwin Martin, left, and Frank Lloyd Wright became friends.

- 1902 - Darwin Martin acquires site for home at Jewett Parkway and Summit Avenue
- 1903 - Building of Barton House and Martin House begins.
- 1904 - Barton House completed.
- 1905 - Martin House essentially completed. Also, landscape architect Walter Burley Griffin completes plan for plantings that include floricycle around the east porch of the Martin House.
- 1909 - Martin House gardener's cottage and greenhouse are built as final additions to the Complex.
- 1935 - Darwin Martin dies
- 1937 - Martin House is abandoned
- 1946 - City of Buffalo acquires Martin House in tax foreclosure
- 1955 - Architect Sebastian Tauriello acquires Martin House
- 1960 - Martin House Complex's pergola, conservatory and carriage house demolished, replaced by apartments
- 1966 - Martin House purchased by University at Buffalo for "president's house"
- 1967 - Family purchases Barton House

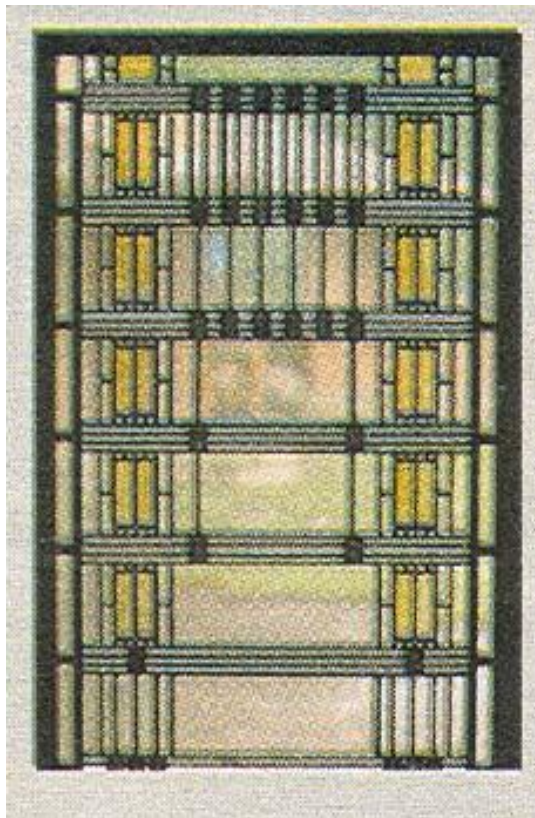
- 1982 - UB School of Architecture assumes stewardship of Martin House
- 1986 - Martin House designated as a National Historic Landmark
- 1992 - Martin House Restoration Corp. formed
- 1994 - Barton House purchased for Martin House Restoration Corp. by The Buffalo News, Rich Products and M&T Bank
- 1997 - Phase I of restoration begins with replacement of Martin and Barton House roofs and gutters
- 2001 - Title to Martin House transferred to Martin House Restoration Corp.
- 2002 - Toshiko Mori selected to design visitors center
- 2003 - Phase II construction commences with foundation waterproofing, drainage, mechanicals and repouring of the verandah
- 2004 - Phase III begins with reconstruction of pergola, conservatory and carriage house
- 2005 - Martin House Restoration Corp. acquires Gardener's Cottage
- 2006 - Last of three non-historic apartment buildings demolished
- October 2006 - Dedication of pergola, conservatory carriage house and greenhouse, with Gov. George E. Pataki presiding

Source: Darwin Martin Restoration Corporation

A prolific career

WRIGHT IN BUFFALO

The seven-building Martin House Complex was one of five separate Wright projects built in and around Buffalo. The others:



10/1/2006

- William R. Heath House, 76 Soldiers Place (1905).
- Walter V. Davidson House, 57 Tillinghast Place (1909).
- Graycliff, the Martin family's lakeshore summer house, 6472 Old Lakeshore Road, Derby (1927) (For tour information, call 947-9217 or visit its Web site: graycliff.bfn.org.)
- Larkin Administration Building, 680 Seneca St. (1906; demolished 1950).

Unrealized Wright-designed projects springing to life:

- Blue Sky Mausoleum, Forest Lawn, designed 1928, built 2004.
- Buffalo Filling Station, Buffalo Transportation Pierce Arrow Museum, 263 Michigan Ave., completion expected 2007.
- Charles and Marie Fontana Boathouse, West Side Rowing Club at foot of Porter Avenue, completion expected 2007-2008.

MISCELLANEOUS FACTS:

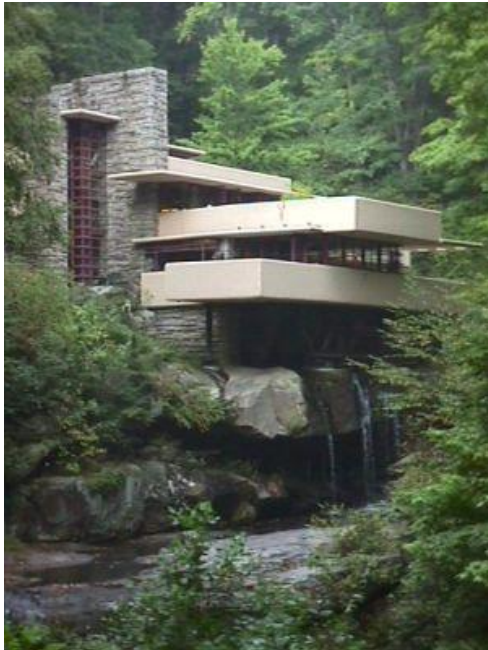
- There were 394 art glass windows in the Darwin

Martin House Complex in 15 distinct patterns.

- During construction, 50 men worked 10 hours per day, six days per week, for two years. They were paid \$2 per day.
- Frank Lloyd Wright designed Purple Martin birdhouses - playing on the family's name - to sit on the four corners of the conservatory. It's unlikely that birds set up housekeeping in the limestone structures.
- Gardeners planted thousands of perennials and bulbs on the property so that something was always in bloom.

Making the Darwin Martin House a tourist magnet will require aggressive marketing.

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Dateline: BEAR RUN, Pa.

By Mark Sommer - NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Illustration: Photo courtesy of Fallingwater

Tourists need to go out of their way to visit Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater, also known as the Edgar J. Kaufman Sr. Residence, in Bear Run, Pa.

At Fallingwater, 70 percent of visitors travel four hours or more to get there, with most spending at least one night in a hotel or bed and breakfast. It's where Buffalo hopes to be someday.

Rural southwest Pennsylvania, where Guernsey cows nearly outnumber residents, would seem an unlikely international destination.

Except for one thing: It is home to Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater, also known as the Edgar J. Kaufman Sr. Residence, possibly the most celebrated masterpiece by the man widely considered America's greatest architect.

Each year, 135,000 tourists travel 75 miles southeast of Pittsburgh to see the National Historic Landmark and nature retreat that was built into the side of a hill and over a waterfall. Would these same people who plunk down \$16 for an adult admission be apt to visit the nearly completed Darwin Martin House Complex in Buffalo, Wright's Prairie-style icon? Yes, and no, according to more than three dozen visitors on a recent day. They ranged from Wright aficionados who consider anything by the architectural master a must-see, to tourists drawn to random attractions that catch their attention.

A majority were unfamiliar with the Martin House and other architectural marvels in Buffalo. But most said they would consider visiting someday -- especially with Niagara Falls nearby -- if they were better informed about the city's cultural assets.

Neil Graham of Toronto was one of several who first learned about the Martin House from the PBS documentary that aired earlier this month, "Frank Lloyd Wright's Buffalo."

"You have to turn your Wright into iconic status," advised Graham. "Then you'll be fine." Fallingwater wasn't always a tourist magnet.

The wooded site limits annual visitors to 135,000 to ensure reserved trips aren't overcrowded. But Lynda Waggoner, Fallingwater's director, said it took the complex, which opened to the public in 1964, 10 years to reach 70,000. That's a goal she suggested would be reasonable to expect the Martin House Complex to draw once it's completed.

Visitors come from all over, a fact underscored in the parking lot where automobiles showed license plates from 13 states and Ontario. The farthest away were Vermont and New Hampshire to the Northeast, Florida to the south and California to the west.

Vacationers came from as far as Russia and Australia.

Sydney architect Ron Dyak was there for the second time, joined by fellow Aussie John Morrissey. He has visited Wright sites in Wisconsin, Los Angeles and Phoenix but was not aware of the Martin House.

"Would I go all the way up to Buffalo to see a piece of architecture? No," he laughed dismissively.

But after being told by Morrissey that the Albright-Knox Art Gallery and Louis Sullivan's famed Guaranty Building were there, Dyak quickly corrected himself, suggesting a future visit is possible.

In contrast, Todd Gemmill, a plumber from Mississauga, Ont., on vacation with his family, was enthusiastic about the Martin House Complex restoration. He saw the PBS documentary and suggested more needs to be done to get the word out.

"A lot of people just know [Fallingwater] because it's in the media a lot, whereas the Martin House is a long-forgotten relic to most people," Gemmill said.

Cheryl Grose of Pittsburgh was more typical. She and her husband have traveled to see Wright homes in Wisconsin and Illinois but were unaware of the Martin House. After being informed of it, she said its presence is further reason to visit Western New York.

"Buffalo has Niagara Falls, so when you include Fort Niagara and Fort George [in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.] -- we visit those sorts of things -- it would be another stop," Grose said.

Lore Dana of Winchendon, Mass., who has driven across Western New York with her family before, agreed. "We never had an awareness of [the Martin House] being there, and we certainly would have made an attempt to go there had we known," Dana said.

Ed Healy of the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau is not surprised by the lack of awareness about the Martin House or other Buffalo cultural assets -- even by tourists at a much-vaunted Wright location.

"That's consistent with what we've found," Healy said.

Despite the notice Buffalo's art and architecture is beginning to receive in leading publications across the country, there's a long way to go, Healy said.

The CVB hired ArtsMarket, a Bozeman, Mont.-based cultural tourism consulting firm, to do a demographic analysis and customer profile this summer of visitors to local cultural attractions.

Its findings and recommendations, released earlier this month, were encouraging for Buffalo's future as a tourist attraction.

"Position Buffalo Niagara as an international destination for architecture, design and the arts. No other American city has the range of assets Buffalo has," ArtsMarket concluded.

Its survey found cultural tourists coming to Buffalo were typically empty nesters 55 and older, or in their 30s without children. They were highly educated and culturally savvy, and a full 28 percent identified themselves as Wright fans, with the same number having gone to Fallingwater.

Visitors to Buffalo came most often from Rochester, New York City, Pittsburgh, Toronto, Chicago and Cleveland.

"They are searchers and very focused consumers. This is the best kind of market a city could possibly have," the study found.

Healy said he hopes the survey findings will attract greater investment in pumping up Buffalo's cultural assets to the outside world. The visitors bureau has been struggling financially since its \$3 million bed tax allocation was slashed in half in 2005, where it remains. That placed its budget at less than a quarter of what other medium-sized cities such as Cleveland and Pittsburgh spend on tourism.

This year the bureau received additional funds from foundations and New York State to hire a media relations firm, redo its Web site, commission a special illustration of the Martin House for the visitors guide, do targeted advertising and produce a 10-minute featurette for the PBS documentary's DVD release, narrated by local preservationist Tim Tielman.

But, Healy said, much more needs to be done. That includes what he called "visitor readiness" -- such things as better directional signs, interpretative markers, more materials and better coordination between institutions.

"This study provides methodical, verifiable research that identifies what our assets are. Now we really need to go to the next level so Buffalo can take its place alongside other great cultural tourism destinations," Healy said.

At Fallingwater, 70 percent of visitors travel four hours or more to get there, with most spending at least one night in a hotel or a bed and breakfast. It's where Buffalo hopes to be someday. "It has a profound economic impact in the region," Waggoner said.

There will be some cross-promotion between Fallingwater and the Martin House, she said, mostly through Web sites and the placement of brochures. But the most important thing to be done now that the complex's reconstructed buildings are up, Waggoner suggested, is to finish the Martin House itself and the planned visitors center while letting people know what's there.

Bringing Wright to the people

Date: Sunday, September 24, 2006

Section: Spotlight

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Page: G16

By Paula Voell - NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Illustration: Ronald J. Colleran/Buffalo News

The author, left, leads a tour as a docent at Frank Lloyd Wright's Darwin Martin House.

Four years ago, I wrote a story about the large corps of volunteers who have rallied to the Darwin Martin House. I was so impressed with the generous spirit I encountered there that I wanted to get involved.

At first, I thought about working in the Wisteria Shop, where I envisioned myself arranging pottery and books and jewelry and chatting with customers. But, after going through three training sessions, I conceded victory to the computerized cash register.

By default, I latched onto the idea of becoming a docent, which has proved to be a good fit. Before being turned loose on the public, I went through 12 three-hour classes, where I learned a multitude of things, including:

- * There are 750 pieces in some of the art glass windows.
- * Buffalo had more millionaires per capita than any city in the country at the turn of the 19th century.

- * And, Frank Lloyd Wright considered this project in Buffalo his magnum opus.

During the training we delved into reams of material, articles and books. And we heard lectures by a Wright scholar, an architect and staff members, as well as senior docents. There were thousands of facts, some of which stuck and many of which didn't.

Eventually, I shadowed and chaperoned several tours and, finally, I gave my "graduation" tour. Now, I give tours whenever my schedule and the need coincide. And I attend continuing education classes to shore up information and to keep my presentation fresh.

As each tour begins, I ask people where they're from and why they're in Buffalo. On a 15-person tour in July, visitors came from Chicago (here for the Corvair convention), Napa Valley, Calif. (visiting friends in the Finger Lakes), Texas (also in search of good pizza) and Shanghai (transacting business). There also were three visitors from Elma who were curious about what's happening in their backyard.

The draw, obviously, is Wright. A Boston couple, for example, slotted Buffalo in their cross-country architectural tour because of the architect. An Ontario family came after watching a locally produced PBS special. "I told my family this is what I wanted for Mother's Day," the young woman told me.

Though we receive a printed tour text, we're not required to slavishly follow it. In fact, each tour takes on a life of its own, depending on the docent. Some focus on the architecture; others include stories about Martin and Wright; some give greater attention to the social history of the times.

I see the information as a story about two men who collaborated on a project that was unusual and magnificent in its time. And I relate how it went from those glory years to dereliction, and, today, to restoration.

I give a conversational tour, believing that most people can absorb only a certain amount of information in our 75 minutes together. For the truly ardent, I direct them to the Wisteria Shop, where they can find a book or two that goes into more detail.

When children are along on tours, I involve them as much as I can, asking them to imagine Darwin Martin traveling from Nebraska to New York, alone, as a young teen. I hand them a heavy terra cotta roof tile to pass around. I pick up a leaf from the 100-year-old ginkgo tree to show them its pretty fan shape.

Out-of-towners get a special invitation to be ambassadors and spread the word in their home towns about what's happening here.

People ask questions about everything: did Wright design screens for the house (yes, and even a storage system with corresponding brass numbers); where is the furniture (some gone, some being renovated); why is the house in this condition (it was abandoned for 17 years).

Usually, people ask because they want to know. But I encountered one I-know-more-than-you-do visitor. For starters, he asked some questions phrased in a way that made it clear he already knew the answers. Later, he asked if he could relate an anecdote. In no time, he was conducting a mini tour in the back while I raised my voice and tried not to be distracted.

When I asked a veteran tour giver what I should have done, she suggested a simple technique: stop talking and look his way. It's easy, it's polite and it calmly gets the message across.

So, as part of my continuing education on leading tours at the Darwin Martin House, I'm practicing silence and staring.

e-mail: pvoell@buffnews.com

>Unveiling the new Martin House

Ticket cost: Adults, \$12; group, \$9; students, \$8. Group tours can be arranged for 15 or more; also, school tours.

Tour times for October and November: 3 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday; 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Saturday; 1 and 2 p.m. Sunday.

The site will be closed Oct. 4, Oct. 25 and Nov. 9. There will be a private dedication and premiere of the Darwin Martin House Complex on Oct. 4. More than 300 guests are expected to attend the 3 p.m. program to celebrate the restoration of the Frank Lloyd Wright designed pergola, conservatory and carriage house at the complex on Jewett Parkway in Buffalo.

As part of Doors Open Niagara, it will be open for complimentary mini tours (no regularly scheduled tours) from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 14 and from 1 to 5 p.m. Oct. 15.

An in-depth two-hour tour with master docent Duane Churchill will be offered at 11 a.m. Oct. 28. His tour will focus on the remarkable client/architect relationship and on details that Wright lavished on this Prairie House. Visitors will see spaces not accessible on the public tour and be allowed to take interior photography. Cost is \$22 per person, \$20 for Martin House Associates. Call for reservations.

Phone: 856-3858

Web site: Darwinmartinhouse.org.

E-mail: tours@darwinmartinhouse.org

-- Paula Voell

"It's always tricky when you have a work in progress," she said. "People don't want to see scaffolding; they want to see things finished and feel like they are going back in time to when the house was occupied," Waggoner said.

"Get that house restored and open, and get the word out."

e-mail: msommer@buffnews.com

PBS special explores Frank Lloyd Wright's heyday in Buffalo

Date: Thursday, August 31, 2006

Section: Lifestyles

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Page: C1

By Alan Pergament

Illustration: The Larkin Building, above, the Darwin Martin House, above right, and the man responsible for them, Frank Lloyd Wright, are featured in the PBS documentary.

Frank Lloyd Wright displayed his plans at the Graycliff Estate.\

The chief designer of the local production "Frank Lloyd Wright's Buffalo" says that filmmaker Ken Burns overlooked the famed architect's Buffalo experience in the filmmaker's 1998 PBS project.

Unfortunately, writer-director-producer Paul Lamont's documentary may suffer the same fate of being overlooked, because it airs at 10 p.m Monday on WNED-TV. Traditionally, Labor Day is a low viewing night.

This compelling story of the relationship between Wright and his chief benefactor, businessman Darwin D. Martin, certainly deserves a better fate. It unquestionably will be an education for any Western New Yorkers who may have been hearing or reading about the Darwin Martin House restoration for so long that they've stopped paying attention to the details.

Designed in Burns' tradition of using biographers, family members and experts, highlighting archival footage and photographs and having correspondence read by actors (Armand Assante is the voice of Wright) and others, this one-hour film is first-class. It is funded by The Buffalo News, the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation, the Zensky Family Foundation, the Gioia Family Fund and the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau. The narrator is David Ogden Stiers, who played Maj. Charles Winchester III on "M*A*S*H."

Lamont quickly documents the similarities between Wright and Martin that was the foundation of their 30-year friendship -- the quest for a perfect family life that had eluded them as children. They also had profound differences. Wright acknowledged an obvious one in a letter to Martin -- Martin was a better friend.

A flourishing city at the turn of the 20th century, Buffalo was a perfect place for Wright to bring his risk-taking architectural mind. It helped that he had a supporter in Martin, who led the search for the architect of the Larkin Building and persuaded the companies to take a risk and give Wright his first significant commission. Martin also hired him to build his own estate.

The film suggests Martin was willing to overlook Wright's tendency to greatly exceed budgets and be more concerned about his reputation than in whether his structures were suitable to his clients' needs.

In short, Wright always felt he was right even when he did some unforgivable things. As one expert notes, "arrogance was his defining characteristic."

Lamont said that the 1998 film by Burns and Lynn Novick dealt more with Wright's personal missteps, which included his scandalous decision to leave his wife and six children for a young lover.

Lamont's film is more of a love letter to Wright's influence in Buffalo, which has more of the architect's structures than any American city besides Chicago. While he acknowledges that the film is done in Burns' style, Lamont adds that he's been making films for PBS for 20 years in the same manner.

"I think it is a style that works for a story like this," said Lamont, who enlisted Stiers to be the narrator. "I called his agent and he was more than happy to do it. He's got a great storytelling voice. And this is such a great story to tell. You needed that voice."

He added that Assante was thrilled to be part of a PBS project. Lamont also enlisted Novick to act as a consultant.

"She really was looking over the script for me," said Lamont, who began working on the film more than 21/2 years ago. "It was pretty much [advice on] story structure, dramatic turning points, bringing out a little more of Wright's background and less of Darwin Martin's background."

Lamont said he asked Jack Quinan, the curator of the Darwin Martin House and an adviser to the film, what he thought led to Burns' decision to "pretty much ignore" the Wright-Martin relationship.

"He said that so many Wright houses are extremely photogenic," said Lamont. "You couldn't get a sense of the scope of the composition of the Martin estate because it is five structures on a large lot. To fully appreciate it, you have to see from an overhead view. Other [Wright] structures you can appreciate in their surroundings."

"[Burns' film] really was about Wright's trials and tribulations. We couldn't let this become a biography of Frank Lloyd Wright. It [also] needed to transcend architecture."

The filmmaker didn't know anything about Wright's relationship with Martin before starting the project.

"I had no idea of the depth and the connection between the two," said Lamont.

The film suggests that Martin was there for Wright whenever the egomaniac was in trouble and financial and personal fires had to be put out, which was often.

If the national airing on PBS inspires people to visit Buffalo, Lamont hopes the tourists will get the same message as Buffalo residents.

"There's an emotional connection not only to Frank Lloyd Wright and Darwin Martin, but to the buildings they brought here," said Lamont. "So often we will go into a Frank Lloyd Wright house and what we see is beautiful, magnificent architecture. We forget that human drama played out on a daily basis in those homes."

Frank Lloyd Wright's Buffalo
10 p.m Monday, WNED-TV
Review: 3 1/2 stars (Out of 4)

e-mail: apergement@buffnews.com
The Buffalo News

Buffalo's ULTIMATE dinner party

Some of WNY's most interesting movers and shakers get together for an (imaginary) evening of dining and conversation

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Page: G1

By CHARITY VOGEL - News Staff Reporter

Illustration: Illustration by Daniel Zakroczemski/Buffalo News

File photo by Dennis C. Enser/Buffalo News

The Darwin Martin House complex on Jewett Parkway is the perfect setting for our imaginary Buffalo dinner party.

It's a gorgeous summer evening in Buffalo, soft and warm, and a gentle breeze drifts down Jewett Parkway.

On the veranda of the Darwin Martin House, Ani DiFranco and Bob Wilmers are deep in conversation over cocktails when Satish Mohan wanders up, balancing a small plate on his palm.

"You have to try these," Satish raves, offering them some spiced almonds. "They're amazing." James Williams is admiring the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed flower gardens. Marv Levy has cornered Joyce Carol Oates and is happily theorizing about football to her.

And just when you start to get a wee bit nervous about Tom Bauerle -- will he behave himself around Hillary? -- a waiter appears in the doorway to announce that dinner is served.

"Good," a voice pipes up. "I'm starving."

It's Tim Russert, and he looks hungry for a classic hometown meal.

This is it -- the very best dinner party Western New York can offer.

Come along as we explore -- at least voyeuristically -- the most unique, fabulous, talk-about-it-for-years-exciting event our city and region could pull off. And did we mention fun?

Oh, we know what we want this dream event to be. We want beauty and drama. We want sparkling conversation. We want amazing food, drinks and a glamorous ambience that a unique and stimulating cast of guests will never forget.

It exists only in our heads, but come on -- it's fun to pretend! So, with the help of our imaginations and the actual creative minds of some top specialists in this sort of thing, we've conceived of the perfect Western New York dinner party.

One of the nation's top party planners -- David Tutera, party guru to the A-list, including the Rolling Stones, Elton John and Jennifer Lopez -- assisted us with crafting the setting, mood and theme.

A top chef conjured up a unique menu. A master of desserts planned the sweets. Talented wine and cocktail experts threw their ideas in, as well.

So, welcome to the party.

It's going to be a great -- make that unforgettable -- time.

>The Place: Darwin Martin House

We can think of lots of places for a swanky party in Western New York, but one rises far above the crowd when it comes to Wow Factor: the Darwin Martin House complex.

The setting is so uniquely stunning -- a five-building estate on Jewett Parkway, showing off Frank Lloyd Wright's peculiar genius to full advantage -- that it offers the perfect backdrop for our event. (Restoration of the complex to its vintage 1907 appearance is under way, and construction dust is everywhere right now -- but we can dream, can't we?)

With a setting this magnificent, Tutera, party planner to the stars, suggests capitalizing on Wright's vision by crafting a "progressive party" -- an event that moves through the complex as the evening goes on.

"Cocktails would be in one of the gardens, dinner in the veranda, and then have guests walk down the pergola -- lined with violinists -- to dessert in the Conservatory, in which they will see the restored Nike of Samothrace," suggests Tutera, host of his own series, "Party Planner with David Tutera," on the Discovery Home Channel. "Guests will leave the party with an everlasting memory."

A brilliant plan. We'll serve dinner on the veranda overlooking the east gardens -- then guests can stroll down the 100-foot pergola to the glass-roofed Conservatory, for dessert under the stars. Breathtaking.

>12 at Dinner: The Guest List

We want 12 at the table because it's an elegant number, and each guest will feel like pampered royalty. And we don't want a cast of the usual suspects. We want a delightfully mixed bag of guests who will have a real hoot talking to each other. (And because we're doing a dream scenario here, we can think about inviting these glitterati without their spouses -- not that they aren't an illustrious group in their own right. Ahem. Cough. Yes, Mr. Ex-President, we mean you.)

Think about it this way: if you've got to spend an evening sitting next to a stranger, who would you choose?

Ani DiFranco: Savvy musician and businesswoman with strong opinions. Fun!

Marv Levy: Back in the saddle at the Buffalo Bills. Who wouldn't want to pick his brain?

Bob Wilmers: Buffalo's Rockefeller. Of course he'll be there.

Hillary Clinton: U.S. Senator with an eye on the White House. A power figure.

Satish Mohan: Amherst has gotten a lot more interesting lately, thanks to him.

Darius Pridgen: East Side preacher with a golden tongue backed by a razor-sharp mind.

Tom Bauerle: Biggest mouth in Buffalo, some days. Will keep the table talk lively.

James Williams: Wouldn't you want to share a meal with the new head of Buffalo's schools?

Barry Snyder: Seneca Nation President is a major mover and shaker.

Joyce Carol Oates: Western New York's literary lioness, with quirky interests.

JoAnn Falletta: Musician extraordinaire in Western New York; a true cultural leader.

Tim Russert: "Meet the Press" moderator and ever-faithful son of the city. Aww!

>The Invitation

We'll send out handwritten invitations on rich paper -- no e-mailed invites for us!

Tutera suggests invitations picturing the antique statue of Nike of Samothrace, which will hopefully be restored to the Darwin Martin complex, where it was intended to stand strikingly against a brick wall as a visual focal point at the end of the pergola. (The folks restoring the complex are working to bring it back to Buffalo.)

"That will introduce an element from the estate" into the invitations, said Tutera.

Details, details! They'll make the evening special.
The Buffalo News

Larkin Exposition celebrates 100 years

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By Tom Buckham - NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Illustration: Sharon Cantillon/Buffalo News

Jerome P. Puma, left, and Lester Rickard, Larkin Exposition co-chairmen, stand in the new pocket park.

A century ago, the finishing touches were being put on the Larkin Administration Building on Seneca Street, facing Larkin Co.'s vast soap and mail-order complex in the industrial flats east of the downtown business district.

The opening of Frank Lloyd Wright's first commercial building in the fall of 1906 -- the year his landmark Darwin Martin House was completed in Parkside -- marked the arrival of an architectural masterpiece and Wright's ascendance as America's genius architect.

The centennial of that shining moment in Buffalo lore will be celebrated at 6 p.m. Friday with the dedication of a pocket park at Swan and Seymour streets, next to a 15-foot-high brick fence pier. The wall is the last remnant of the seven-story office building, where workers were energized by organ music and rays from a skylight 76 feet above the main floor. Many regard its 1950 demolition as the nation's greatest architectural loss.

The triangular park where the rear wall of the famous red brick building stood was created by members of the Larkin Collectors Group, co-sponsor with the Graycliff Conservancy of Saturday's fifth Larkin Exposition in the Larkin at Exchange Building, Van Rensselaer and Exchange streets. The space features a historical marker depicting the 60-acre mail-order complex at the company's zenith in the early 20th century, surrounded by crushed brick symbolizing the headquarters' demise.

The ceremony will be followed by a live auction in Larkin at Exchange and a 100th anniversary program hosted by Diane Chrisman, president of the Graycliff Conservancy, which is restoring a Wright-designed home in Derby. The program will salute CityView Properties, which converted the Larkin Terminal Warehouse into Larkin at Exchange, a Class A office building. Guests will include John E. Larkin and Diane Larkin Teague, great-great-grandchildren, and Sarah Larkin, great-granddaughter, of company founder John D. Larkin. Proceeds from the ticketed event will assist the Graycliff project.

Saturday's schedule will open with a walking tour of the Larkin manufacturing complex from 10 a.m. to noon, costing \$8 per person.

The expo, from noon to 5 p.m., will feature hundreds of Larkin premiums -- gifts ranging from china to furniture that were awarded to people who ordered Larkin products. Admission at the door will be \$15, or \$12 for those 65 and older and students. Children under 12 will be free.

Slide lectures on the Larkin Administration Building will be presented at 2 and 3 p.m. Tickets to each will be \$5 in addition to expo admission, and seating will be limited.

e-mail: tbuckham@buffnews.com

With skylight frame back atop conservatory, Darwin Martin House revival takes elegant step

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By Tom Buckham - NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Illustration: Ronald J. Collieran/Buffalo News

The skylight's metal frame -- copper-clad aluminum instead of the original steel --- is lowered Wednesday onto the conservatory designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, one of three reconstructed buildings in the Darwin Martin House complex, which is undergoing a \$35 million renovation.

Buffalo's Frank Lloyd Wright revival moved onward -- and upward -- Wednesday with the delicate placement of a metal skylight frame atop the Darwin Martin House's reconstructed conservatory.

It took about an hour to swing three angled sections from flatbed trailers to the roof of the smallish golden brick building, where they all but disappeared from ground-level view.

It is from the inside that visitors will be best able to see what Wright tried to accomplish with this structure -- one of three buildings in the original Martin House complex that disappeared during decades of abandonment and neglect and have been painstakingly replicated as part of the \$35 million project. "It's a simple concept, but a really elegant one," Mary Roberts, chief operating officer of Darwin Martin House Restoration Corp., said of the conservatory, whose wainscoted walls and tile floor, bathed in natural light, will be clearly visible through the pergola extending from the main house at 125 Jewett Parkway.

"The skylight is a very important element of the design," she added.

It may be one of those rare times in historic preservation where restorers are doing an old master one better.

The 1905 skylight was made of steel, which rusted badly over the years, Roberts said, so the corporation decided to make the new frame of durable copper-clad aluminum -- material that was not available early in Wright's career.

The copper-clad replacement, fabricated by Colgate Industries in South Buffalo, will be more striking than the steel ever was, she predicted.

The pergola, conservatory and carriage house -- another long-missing element -- are nearing completion, bringing Wright's plan into sharp focus for the growing stream of tourists and keeping the massive project on schedule for an October dedication ceremony.

A greenhouse, reflecting pool and a fountain will be soon installed near the carriage house, and the property will be temporarily landscaped.

Another piece of Wright's Buffalo legacy was spiffed up Wednesday at Swan and Seymour streets, as members of the Larkin Collectors Group spread crushed red brick around a historical marker near the "Larkin pier" -- the only remaining trace of the famous Larkin Administration Building.

The "pocket park" will help visitors imagine the Larkin Co.'s vast mail-order manufacturing complex during its heyday and contemplate the missing office tower -- a Wright masterpiece whose 1950 demolition is considered by some historians the most significant architectural loss in North American history.

The 16-foot-high pier was part of a red brick wall on the building's western side.

e-mail: tbuckham@buffnews.com
The Buffalo News

Martin House gets more state funds

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By Tom Buckham - NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Illustration: Derek Gee/Buffalo News

Architect Ted Lownie shows State Parks Commissioner Bernadette Castro the restoration of the Darwin Martin House.

Leaders of the Darwin Martin House restoration regard Bernadette Castro, state commissioner of parks, recreation and historic preservation, as an old friend and partner. As one of Gov. George E. Pataki's original Cabinet members, she has had a say in the project longer than some of them have.

Castro, who is likely to follow Pataki out the door when he leaves office at the end of this year, let her affection shine through Monday as she announced another \$350,000 grant for the landmark Martin House during a news conference on the veranda of Frank Lloyd Wright's Jewett Parkway masterpiece. "One of my first visits after I was confirmed in '95 was to the Darwin Martin House," she said, recalling how her preservation office agonizingly followed the restoration group's far-ranging, eventually successful, search for a kiln to duplicate the complex's original Roman gold brickwork.

"Oh, the torture that went on!" she said, drawing laughs from board and staff members.

Coming back 11 years later to tour the pergola and carriage house, rebuilt from that custom-fired brick, was a sentimental journey, Castro said.

Robert J. Kresse, a founder and chairman of the restoration corporation, lauded the "public-private partnership" between his group and the Pataki administration, terming the latest grant

"extremely important" in pushing the \$35 million project toward completion. "We're near the finish line," he said.

The Martin House grant was among five totaling \$750,000 that Castro doled out from the state environmental protection kitty.

She announced grants of \$100,000 to the Town of Orchard Park to buy 53 acres along Bussendorfer Road to expand Brush Mountain Park; \$100,000 to the City of Lockport to renovate Outwater Memorial Park; \$50,000 for the expansion and renovation of Boston's town park; and \$49,870 to the Town of Cheektowaga to rehab Dingens Park.

Castro, who will return July 14 to receive an award from the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, was followed to the podium by Pataki's newest Cabinet member, Secretary of State Christopher Jacobs.

He had two grants of his own to announce, also from environmental protection funds: \$77,000 to the Town of Porter to update land-use regulations to comply with the Niagara River Greenway plan; and \$25,000 to the City of Tonawanda to design a new park area along Young Street next to Ellicott Creek and a Niagara River overlook in Niawanda Park.

e-mail: tbuckham@buffnews.com
The Buffalo News

Darwin Martin complex to include working greenhouse

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By Tom Buckham - NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Illustration: This is how an artist envisions the greenhouse, which will adjoin the Darwin Martin complex in the yard behind 291 Woodward Ave.

Four years after the Darwin Martin House was completed in 1905, the wealthy owner added one last touch without consulting architect Frank Lloyd Wright: an inexpensive, freestanding greenhouse.

Wright had designed a small building in which flowers were to be cultivated, but as the structure took shape, Martin complained that it looked more like a conservatory than a "growing house," according to "Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House Complex: Architecture as Portraiture," by University at Buffalo art historian and Martin House consultant Jack Quinan.

So in 1909, the industrialist ordered a 60-foot-long, commercially designed greenhouse and had it put up along the property line between the gardener's cottage and the garage and stable, ignoring Wright's offer "to put a little architecture on it."

For years afterward, the simple glass-enclosed structure produced flowers and plants that brightened Wright's grand "prairie house" and the surrounding buildings and grounds. When the restored complex is dedicated Oct. 4, another greenhouse -- smaller than the original but serving the same purpose -- will be a point of interest. A gift from Buffalo News Publisher Stanford Lipsey and his wife, Judith, the 432-square-foot structure, costing about \$100,000, will occupy a space outside the compound's footprint, in the deep yard behind 291 Woodward Ave. That parcel

was purchased by the Darwin Martin House Restoration Corp. five years ago to enable reconstruction of the carriage house that once stood at the northern edge of the complex.

Earlier this year, the Lipseys gave the corporation \$500,000 to buy back the Gardener's Cottage at 285 Woodward, the last of four residences Wright designed for Martin in the complex bounded by Jewett Parkway, Woodward and Summit Avenue. The glass-enclosed greenhouse will stand next to the exposed foundation of the original, which will enclose a new garden.

The new structure was added to the \$35 million project only after Lipsey, one of the restoration group's founders, read the passage about it in Quinan's book.

"I never knew about the greenhouse because Frank Lloyd Wright didn't design it," Lipsey said.

Like its predecessor, the greenhouse will be "a utilitarian building" devoid of architectural embellishments, said Martin House restoration architect Ted Lownie.

It will supply flowers for the complex's buildings and for the interpretive gardens around them, he added. It will not be open to the public, and access will be limited to staff and volunteers who will maintain the plants and service the gardens.

"It won't be on any tours," Lownie added.

With the addition of the greenhouse, the Martin House complex will have more buildings -- seven -- than any Frank Lloyd Wright destination, Lipsey said.

e-mail: tbuckham@buffnews.com

Graycliff restoration takes another big step

Structural repairs set on two estate buildings

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Page: B1

By Tom Buckham - NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Once the summer home of the Darwin D. Martin family, Graycliff is rarely mentioned in the same breath as Western New York's other Frank Lloyd Wright icons: the Darwin Martin House and the extinct Larkin Administration Building.

Yet anyone who believes the Derby estate is a lesser work should take another gander at this "powerful work by the Michelangelo of modernism," architectural historian John H. Conlin suggested Monday as public officials and volunteers gathered to mark an important step forward in Graycliff's ongoing restoration. Phase III will include structural repairs to both the main building, the Isabelle R. Martin House -- she was the owner's wife -- and the adjacent Foster House.

The 1926 commission to design a cottage on a bluff overlooking Lake Erie for the Martins marked both the "conclusion and culmination" of the long relationship with the mail-order millionaire that allowed Wright's career to survive and blossom, Conlin said.

It was Martin who had brought Wright to Buffalo more than two decades earlier and had remained the architect's steadfast patron, friend and financial adviser through thick and thin.

And this was the thinnest of times for the architect. Yet Wright was 60, "a mature architect" ready to take his genius to new heights, Conlin said.

What emerged from the drawing board, he said, was the realization of a Wright ideal, "a natural house totally integrated into its landscape."

The landmark at 6472 Old Lake Shore Road stands as "the greatest teaching tool for understanding Frank Lloyd Wright" as he left behind the "prairie house" phase that yielded Buffalo's Martin House, among many others, and entered the era in which he designed Pennsylvania's famous Fallingwater.

"This building takes in the whole sweep of Wright's career," Conlin said. "We're lucky it's not a prairie house."

The ambitious new phase of the more than \$3 million restoration will include drainage improvements, interior framing and electrical and plumbing work on the Foster House and the restoration of the Isabelle Martin House's massive stone chimney, windows and doors. The roofs and cantilevered balconies of both structures also will be restored.

The Graycliff Conservancy, which took over the run-down property in 1999, will offer volunteer-led tours each Tuesday through Sunday and in-depth architectural tours each Saturday during the restoration. Call 947-9217 for tour information.

e-mail: tbuckham@buffnews.com

Melodies by design

BPO's 'Prarie Music CD attempts to merge Copland's sound of the American West with Wright's view of open spaces and light

Date: Sunday, June 11, 2006

Section: Spotlight

Edition: Final

Page: G3

By Mary Kunz Goldman - NEWS CLASSICAL MUSIC CRITIC

Illustration: Frank Lloyd Wright, top, and Aaron Copland both filled their creations with a uniquely American spirit. Neither was a stranger to Buffalo.

Huge, sweeping and majestic, the Midwestern prairies boast of America's wealth, bounty and infinite possibilities.

They inspired Aaron Copland when he wrote "Rodeo" and the music for the movie "The Red Pony."

And, at the same time, they moved Frank Lloyd Wright to dream up houses filled with light and space. Wright's "prairie-style" creations were designed to draw the viewer's eye across horizontal planes -- to give a feeling of spaciousness and oneness with nature. Both Copland and Wright are the focus of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra's new CD, a sparkling recording called "Prairie Music."

"We thought that would be the perfect connection -- two American mavericks, two American pioneers, working independently, but working to crystallize the American spirit in their work," says BPO Music Director JoAnn Falletta, who leads the orchestra on the disc.

"Prairie Music" could be seen as a tribute to Buffalo. Copland made numerous appearances here, both at the University at Buffalo and with the BPO at Kleinhans Music Hall. And Buffalo's Darwin Martin House is the boldest example of Wright's prairie style.

"Wright was a pantheist," says Mary Roberts, executive director of the Martin House Restoration Corp. "He felt nature was the only face of God we would ever see. His experience with nature as a child living on the prairies in the summer influenced everything he did. His designs were meant to look as if they bloomed where they were planted."

The Martin House complex, Roberts says, held a unique place in Wright's heart.

"It was not necessarily the particular size of the buildings, but there were so many structures on the complex," she explains. "It was a microcosm of society, from the garden cottage to the Barton House, and up to the (main) house. It was very unusual to have that many buildings on one site, all relating to each other by Wright's purposeful design, on such a large piece of land in an urban setting."

Wright himself believed that the Martin House came closer to fulfilling his dreams than any of his other creations.

"The composition of the (Martin complex) buildings was what Wright called 'a well-nigh perfect composition.'" says Roberts. "He kept plans for the complex tacked up over his desk in his drafting studio for many years, and asked students to refer to it, because he thought it was 'well-nigh perfect.'"

Bringing the West to life

The Buffalo News

Roberts gets key job at Martin House

Date: Friday, May 26, 2006

Section: Local

Edition: Final

Page: D3

By Tom Buckham - NEWS STAFF REPORTER

In her eight years as a paid employee of the Darwin Martin Restoration Corp., Mary F. Roberts has worn several hats -- including a hard hat.

Soon after moving from a volunteer leadership role to part-time associate director of the nonprofit corporation in 1998, she became finance director and then was asked to oversee the intricate reconstruction of the landmark Frank Lloyd Wright complex on Jewett Parkway.

"I'm also director of human resources," she said. "It depends on which phone call I'm answering."

Now, Roberts, whose background is in accounting, is taking on her most challenging assignment yet as the group's first chief operating officer.

With the project heading toward completion this summer, she will have a major say in developing a strategy for marketing the historic property as a national and international tourist destination. "The board is working very hard on a comprehensive plan to welcome visitors on a personal level," she said.

Roberts will take over duties previously handled by the man who hired her, Executive Director John C. Courtin. He will step down next week to become president of Friends of Acadia, a volunteer organization dedicated to preserving Acadia National Park and surrounding communities on Mount Desert Island, Maine.

At this point, the restoration group does not plan to hire another executive director, said President Robert D. Gioia.

"When John was hired, the Martin House corporation was in its infancy. It needed his expertise to establish what needed to be done to move forward," Gioia said. "For the last seven years, it has really been a construction project."

"We wanted somebody who could be hands-on and move it to the next level," he said, "and Mary knows every aspect."

One of Roberts' first priorities will be to hire a marketing director and staff "to let the world know this facility is fully constructed and open for tours," Gioia said. "We want people to come see what we've done."

e-mail: tbuckham@buffnews.com

The Buffalo News

Foundation could put grant money to better use

Date: Monday, May 8, 2006

Section: Editorial Page

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Page: A6

By Robert M. Silverman

Column: Another voice / A tale of two cities

Buffalo is truly a tale of two cities. Recently, the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo awarded the 21st Century Fund 2006 grant to WNED-TV to cover the advertising costs for the documentary "Frank Lloyd Wright's Buffalo."

I am amazed that the foundation could not find a better use for its \$100,000 grant in Buffalo. After all, local foundations have already committed more than \$268,000 to the documentary, and that is only a drop in the bucket compared to the \$23 million raised to restore the Darwin Martin House.

Buffalo's cultural elite are willing to spend millions restoring houses that nobody will ever live in, while they ignore the acute housing needs of our most distressed communities. In a city where community-based housing organizations struggle to survive, it is a shame that the foundation ignores them while subsidizing pet projects of the local elite.

Consider the irony of this action. The majority of Buffalo's community-based housing organizations have annual budgets of less than \$250,000. In the current fiscal environment, financial support coming from state and local governments for those organizations is declining.

As a result, local housing organizations have increasingly turned to local foundations for help, despite the fact that this help has not been great in the past. For instance, in 2003 the foundation gave less than \$62,000 to community-based housing organizations, a mere 1 percent of its total giving.

So, why did the Community Foundation decide to invest in advertising for Frank Lloyd Wright's Buffalo? The answer is simple, to promote architectural tourism. Not to better the lives of Buffalo's needy or to enhance the quality of life for Buffalo residents.

By awarding the grant to WNED-TV's advertising campaign, the foundation rejected other proposals that would help people in Buffalo.

Among the rejected proposals were plans to bring healthy food to poor neighborhoods, provide Head Start/day care on the East Side, improve local Boys & Girls Club facilities, award college scholarships to disadvantaged minority high school students and assist victims of domestic violence. The list of rejected proposals goes on and on.

As the architectural tourists drive through the inner city on their way to Frank Lloyd Wright's Buffalo, they may ask: What is the 21st Century Fund doing for the people who live here? The answer to that question is simple: nothing.

As things currently stand, 11 people who give \$2,100 to \$25,000 to the fund vote on who wins the annual award. Although the Community Foundation's Web site purports that the process is "open, democratic [and] interactive," this is hardly the case. When it comes to the 21st Century Fund, you have to pay to play -- and it doesn't look like they play fair.

Robert M. Silverman is an associate professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University at Buffalo and a senior research associate at the Center for Urban Studies.

The Buffalo News

The Buffalo News

Allowing Gardener's Cottage to bloom anew

In reclaiming a Wright creation, restorers now have final piece of architectural mosaic

Date: Wednesday, March 1, 2006

Section: Local

Edition: Final

Page: B1

By Tom Buckham - NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Illustration: Sharon Cantillon/Buffalo News

Gardener's Cottage, one of four residences designed for Darwin D. Martin, has been bought by Martin House Restoration Corp.

"It was always our wish that the cottage again become part of the complex." Robert D. Gioia, chairman, Martin House Restoration Corp.

The Gardener's Cottage at 285 Woodward Ave. was the last of four residences completed in the complex near Delaware Park that Frank Lloyd Wright designed for Buffalo industrialist Darwin D. Martin in the early 1900s.

Like the structures that preceded it, including the landmark Martin House around the corner on Jewett Parkway, it fell into other hands when the Depression wiped out the Martin family fortune decades later.

Now the Gardener's Cottage is back in the fold, reclaimed by Martin House Restoration Corp. with a \$500,000 gift from Stanford Lipsey, publisher of The Buffalo News, and his wife, Judith. The purchase of the wood-and-stucco building -- the only part of the complex's original footprint that remained outside the corporation's control -- removes the last hurdle in a continuing \$33 million effort to return the entire property to pristine condition, as the avatar of Buffalo's rich architectural heritage and a future tourist attraction.

"It was always our wish that the cottage again become part of the complex," said Robert D. Gioia, the restoration group's new chairman. "The challenge has been getting the seller to sell."

Years of patient cultivation by Executive Director John C. Courtin paid off last fall when the group came to terms with cottage owners Nancy M. and John G. Kinsman.

Lipsey put up the money "because of his passion for this project," Gioia said. "He has been one of the key people driving the effort to bring national attention to Buffalo's great architecture and make the city a cultural tourism destination."

The cottage was built with tall rectangular panels to create an illusion of the pier-and-cantilever principle that characterized the Darwin Martin House, according to the Buffalo Architecture Guide.

It is important not only for its design, but as a symbol of American life in the early 1900s, said architect Ted Lownie, who is overseeing restoration of the Martin House complex.

"First, it completes the picture that Wright and Martin created in 1906," he said. "Second, it is valuable for its typology."

"You had the very large Martin House for the wealthy; the Barton House, appropriate for a middle-class family; an apartment in the Carriage House; servants' quarters in the main house; and the very compact Gardener's Cottage.

"The typologies are all there, and don't exist anywhere else in the country on one property designed by one architect."

Restoration of Wright's design will enter the home stretch this month when the last of three 1950s apartment buildings on the Martin House grounds is demolished. Work is continuing on replication of the Carriage House, Conservatory and Pergola. A ribbon-cutting later this year will mark the site's centennial.

e-mail: tbuckham@buffnews.com

Courtin to leave Martin House post after eight years

Date: Wednesday, February 22, 2006

Section: Local

Edition: Final

Page: B3

By Tom Buckham - NEWS STAFF REPORTER

With the Darwin Martin House well along the path toward its rebirth as a Frank Lloyd Wright tourism mecca, the man who guided the restoration for the past eight years is stepping aside.

John C. Courtin, executive director of the Martin House Restoration Corp., said Tuesday he will leave later this year to become president of Friends of Acadia, a volunteer organization dedicated to preserving Acadia National Park and surrounding communities on Mount Desert Island, Maine.

His wife, Sharon, who is executive director of Frank Lloyd Wright's Rowing Boathouse Corp., and their three children will go with him. "When you are in a role such as mine, you have a special responsibility to manage your own tenure," said Courtin, 57. "You know better than anybody the things you do best. What I did was the early-stage organizing -- gathering volunteers, staff and board members. And if you do things right, you sort of work yourself out of the job."

The project now needs someone with the skill to trumpet the 1906 Martin House, one of Wright's early triumphs, to the fast-growing architectural and heritage tourism trade, he said. "It needs to be marketed nationally and internationally."

The organization has achieved or nearly achieved the strategic goals set out when he quit his law practice to become executive director in 1998, said Courtin, who in 1992 had been among the group's incorporators and founding directors. Among the challenges that have been met:

- * Raising more than \$35 million to save and restore the main house and other buildings in the complex on Jewett Parkway that Wright designed for Buffalo industrialist Darwin D. Martin and his family in the early 1900s.

- * Clearing the way for the return of the long-missing pergola, conservatory, carriage house and other elements of Wright's design by buying three apartment buildings that were erected on the property in the 1950s. The last of those structures is due to be razed next month, and the substantially restored complex is expected to officially open in July.

- * Finding an emerging architect to design a visitor center that will complement Wright's vision for the prairie-style complex. New York City-based Toshiko Mori won the design competition with her plan for an unobtrusive, glass-walled garden pavilion to be built near the main house. Construction preparations are nearing completion, Courtin said.

"From a structural point of view, the project is really approaching the point of completion," he said, adding that the Martin House board, staff and volunteer corps are "stronger than ever."

Howard Zemsky, who recently stepped down after five years as chairman, said Courtin "devoted himself to this project with boundless energy from Day One. His tenure was filled with accomplishment."

Courtin had expected to remain in Buffalo until the opportunity in Maine arose. "Sharon and I have always had a special spot in our heart for Acadia," a mountainous 47,000-acre preserve on the rugged Atlantic coast near Bar Harbor, he said.

Though the National Parks Service is in charge, federal budget cuts have made Friends of Acadia an important ally in protecting the park and its surroundings, Courtin said. The 20-year-old group faces some of the same challenges that the Martin House group confronted when he arrived.

The Buffalo News

And now the fun part -- building Wright's boathouse

Work to begin this month

Date: Wednesday, September 6, 2006

Section: Local Edition: Final Page: B1

By Tom Buckham - NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Illustration: Bill Wippert/Buffalo News

Bill Maggio, left, and Ted Marks stand along the shore of the Black Rock Channel near the West Side Rowing Club, where a new boathouse designed by Frank Lloyd Wright will be built.

Now for the easy part -- actually building Frank Lloyd Wright's boathouse.

A few months behind schedule and \$500,000 or so short of its fundraising goal, the nonprofit corporation pushing the revival of Wright's 101-year-old plan for a rowing clubhouse will break ground today on the Black Rock Channel near the West Side Rowing Club.

Serious construction will begin this month, with completion set for next summer. The \$5.4 million facility will serve both as an attraction on Buffalo's "Wright stuff" architectural tourism trail and a functioning boathouse equipped and operated by the rowing club.

Membership in the West Side club, already one of the nation's largest -- if not the largest -- is expected to rise substantially from the present figure of more than 600, said President William J. Maggio.

Most new members will be students from area schools who have not been exposed to the club's popular rowing programs or else have been unable to sign up because the present clubhouse adjacent to the Wright site is running at capacity.

The club has made a strong commitment to involve Buffalo public high school students, Maggio said. They and others whose schools are not affiliated with the club will be invited to enroll in West Side's high school program, which has 570 members and for years has "had a significant impact on the youth of Western New York," he said.

Designed by Wright for the University of Wisconsin in 1905, the boathouse, will be a 4,500-square-foot pressed-concrete structure with storage bays for racing shells at ground level. A clubhouse adorned with art glass windows will occupy the upper floor.

The groundbreaking follows a series of complicated land deals to secure the site, a five-year fundraising campaign backed by television producer Tom Fontana that drew contributions from many film and TV stars, and the receipt of a \$1 million state grant.

"It has been a monumental task to get this far," said Theodore E. Marks, president of the Wright boathouse organization. He is confident the fund drive will reach its goal before the facility opens. Individual West Side Rowing Club members have given generously to the project, Maggio added.

Lehigh Construction Group of Orchard Park will be the general contractor.

The Buffalo News

WNY shouldn't try to save every old building

Date: Thursday, September 28, 2006

Section: Editorial Page

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Page: A8

By Andrew Jablonski

Column: Another voice / Demolition derby

I am one of those 30ish adults who decided to stay in Western New York to raise my family and make a home. Like other people my age, I considered my options when I graduated from college, looked elsewhere and decided to make Buffalo my home.

I have been fortunate to find a job that allows me to own a mid-size home and start a family. Being a hometown boy, I have grown accustomed to the unrelenting barrage of proposed projects in this area.

This is a continuous, endless cycle that we have all become familiar with. It starts with an article in The News and is shortly followed up with the obituary photo -- often called the artist's rendering. When you see the artist's rendering in The News, you know the project is as good as dead. The common thread in this cycle is the never-ending cry from our local preservationists. Once again, we have seen this occur with Memorial Auditorium. In our

continuing attempt to lure Bass Pro, we are considering razing this blighted building. Sure enough, about a week after this is reported in The News, a commentary by Mary Kunz Goldman argues that we should save this structure.

And once again, the same old arguments from the same "expert," Tim Tielman, are used. I can see it now, another column coming from Donn Esmonde supporting the Aud, probably interviewing an obese man graciously described as happily rotund.

Well, I have had enough. My generation of individuals, the new silent majority, does not want to save every old building in this region. While it makes sense to rebuild the Erie Canal and to restore the Frank Lloyd Wright buildings, we have to draw a line.

We do not want a connection to every past failure in this region. We do not want to preserve every grain elevator, rail station or decrepit hockey arena in this region. If anything, these links to our past are a constant reminder of bad decisions made by the generations that preceded us.

It is our time to make decisions, and we issue a call to action. It is time to tear down Memorial Auditorium, all grain elevators and the H.H. Richardson complex eyesore. In addition, sink the floating wreck parked by the Cargill elevators in the inner harbor. Maybe we could tip the grain elevators into the floating wreck and have a massive, liberating celebration.

Furthermore, let's continue on our destructive path and demolish every old steel plant, those five buildings at the corner of Elmwood and Forest, any toll booth within 25 miles of the city limits, the old AM&A's building and the Skyway.

And lastly, let's demolish Fulton Street and sell it to the Senecas. Haven't we bullied them long enough?

If this seems too much, we will settle for tearing down the Aud. And please build a bridge.

Pretty please?

The Buffalo News

The architect's life as soap opera

Date: Sunday, September 24, 2006

Section: Spotlight Edition: Final Page: G16

By Christopher Hawthorne - LOS ANGELES TIMES

It won't take long for readers of "The Fellowship," an ambitious new study of Frank Lloyd Wright by Roger Friedland and Harold Zellman, to realize that the book is no ordinary exercise in architectural history.

Maybe it will happen on Page 8, when the authors describe the teenage Wright daydreaming about sex, drifting into his "moist dream space." Or on Page 17, when they write that the young architect was so entranced watching his mentor Louis Sullivan at the drafting table -- "the languid lines coursing through his ornamental detailing" -- that he became "ashamed by his own pleasure." It certainly will be clear by Page 47, when we learn that the mystic Georgi Gurdjieff, a Svengali of sorts for Wright's third wife, Olgivanna, possessed a "feline yet powerful body" and eyes that could "bring a woman to orgasm from across a room."

Wright is in many respects the Abraham Lincoln of architectural history, a figure who has inspired enough books to fill a small library. With "The Fellowship," Friedland, a professor of religious studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Zellman, a Los Angeles architect, enter this crowded field with an unusually detailed account of the architect's unorthodox design process, in particular the role played by the apprentices, many of them gay

men, who surrounded Wright at his Taliesin Fellowship in Wisconsin and Taliesin West in Arizona.

Nine years in the making, the book provides a sustained look at the Fellowship during the period when Wright produced the masterpieces of his late career: Fallingwater, the Johnson Wax building and the Guggenheim Museum.

Yet it is an almost bizarre hybrid, a serious piece of scholarship wrapped in melodrama, spiritualism and sexual innuendo. And if you think that's a charge that will bother the authors, well, think again.

"We tried to have it both ways," Friedland cheerfully admitted, sitting near his coauthor during a recent interview in Zellman's suburban Los Angeles living room.

Zellman then pulled out the book's first published review, in BookPage, and proudly pointed out a passage comparing "The Fellowship" to a soap opera.

"We wanted to create a certain intimacy, a sense that the reader is part of the day-to-day life of Wright's Fellowship," Zellman said. "And that's how a soap opera works too."

Theirs is not an entirely new approach to the study of Wright, of course: The architect's life was fodder for the tabloid press and the scolding moralists of his own day, particularly after Wright's lover, Mamah Cheney, and two of her children were killed at Taliesin by a servant in 1914. The Wright who was hopelessly, sometimes cruelly, self-absorbed shows up in nearly every treatment of his work, including Brendan Gill's 1987 biography, Ken Burns' 1998 PBS documentary and even the short volume Ada Louise Huxtable wrote for the Penguin Lives series in 2004.

But the Fellowship itself has never come in for the same level of scrutiny. In part this is due to the tight control that Olgivanna held over Wright's archives until her death in 1985. But it also has much to do, the authors maintain, with a cult of genius among historians as strong as the one that held sway inside Wright's drafting room.

"There's an incredible collection of books on Wright -- something like 1,000 publications altogether," Zellman said. "And most are filtered through this lens of genius. We essentially decided to treat Frank Lloyd Wright as an ordinary person while acknowledging his enormous talent."

As a result, the book describes in great detail not only how the designs for Fallingwater and the Guggenheim came together but also Wright's anti-Semitism, his isolationist politics and the drugs abused by his troubled daughter Iovanna. Taliesin and Taliesin West as painted by the authors are hothouses of competition, jealousy and longing -- much of it orchestrated by Olgivanna, who was three decades younger than Wright and who married the architect in 1928.

The Buffalo News

Market city, and tourists will come

Date: Friday, September 15, 2006

Section: Local

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Page: D1

By Donn Esmonde

The future of Buffalo tourism came to town this week.

The counterargument to the skeptics sat Thursday morning in a downtown coffee shop, the early trickle of what -- unless we utterly blunder -- will soon become a steady stream.

He is the prototype for an economy-boosting, image-shifting future. It is a future built because -- pat ourselves on the back -- we understood what we have and are whipping it into prime-time shape. Randy Duchaine is a photographer from Brooklyn who has worked in every state and in 23 countries. He came to Buffalo a few months ago to do an article for Spirit, Southwest Airlines' in-flight magazine. The piece on the city's food, character and architectural treasures will be in the seat pocket of every Southwest flight next month. More than a million people will see it.

That is good news. The kicker: The guy who came here for work came back this week, on his own dime, for pleasure. Duchaine brought his wife and mother-in-law. He wanted to share the "pleasant surprise" he discovered.

They are proof of the premise that we have what it takes to lure upscale tourists. The home of blizzards and Bills is on the cusp of a cottage industry in culture, character and architecture.

"People I know in New York City go to Europe all the time," said Duchaine, who is worldly wise but small-town friendly. "I know they would go wild for this place. There is so much culture and art, it's incredible."

Thousands already come from afar to Frank Lloyd Wright's little-marketed, nearly restored Darwin Martin Complex. The non-accidental tourists confirm the wisdom of restoring our architectural and historic icons. They are the early return on multimillion-dollar investments in everything from Erie Canal Harbor -- the world-renowned canal's prime, work-in-progress historic site -- to the Martin Complex, genius architect Wright's early masterpiece.

Duchaine's mother-in-law, a self-described "culture vulture," typifies the target audience. She has the time, money and urge to see the "touchstones" in which Buffalo abounds. "You have a market here for people like me," said Dee Sato. "Buffalo is one of the few places that didn't tear down its great buildings. Whether it's because you didn't have the money to, or you had the foresight not to, you have all of this [great architecture] left. I'm quite impressed."

The historic canal terminus and the Martin Complex are big fish in an overstocked cultural pond, with gems such as Louis Sullivan's Guaranty Building and H.H. Richardson's towers, the startling Albright-Knox gallery, Underground Railroad sites and East Aurora's Roycroft Campus -- birthplace of America's Arts and Crafts movement. It is enough to keep upscale tourists busy for days.

Doubt it? More than 100,000 people annually trek to Fallingwater, a Wright site hidden in the Pennsylvania woods. We have Fallingwater times five, just a few minutes off the Thruway.

Market it, and they will come. With the convention bureau's marketing dollars disappearing, we need to make sure our multimillion-dollar investments don't die on the vine of silence.

Besides landmarks, we have the vanishing charm of the everyday, in everything from neighborhoods of Victorians to Ted's Hot Dogs to the Anchor Bar to smokestacks and grain

elevators -- remnants of our muscular past. Buffalo is a "real place" alternative to the chain-store, fast-food, imitation-funky homogenization that engulfs America.

"I'm not into a Disneyland kind of experience," said Duchaine. "I like the real thing, and Buffalo has the real thing."

Today, Duchaine is a visitor worth writing about. Five years from now, if we don't mess up, he will be just another tourist face in the crowd.

e-mail: desmonde@buffnews.com