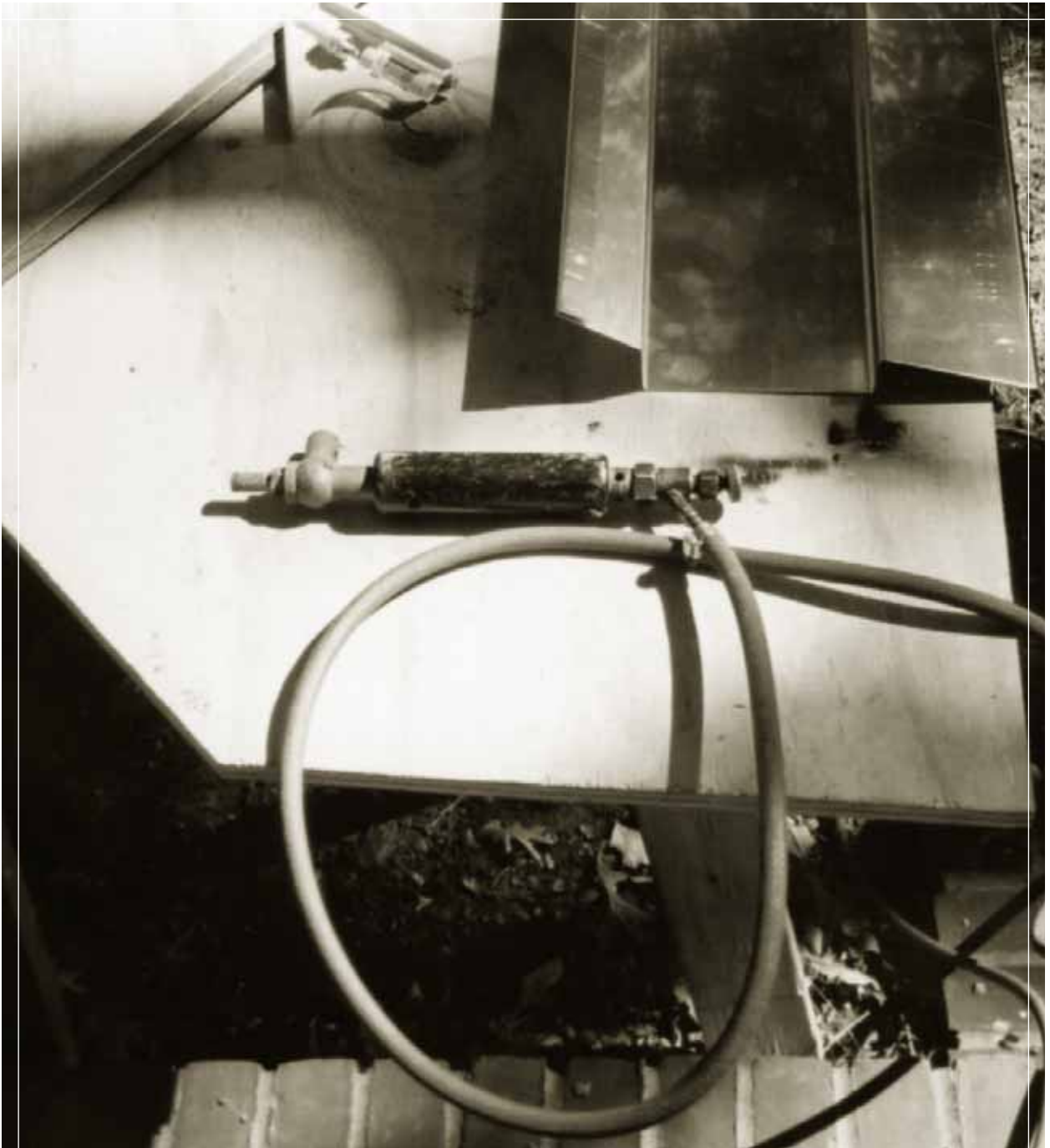
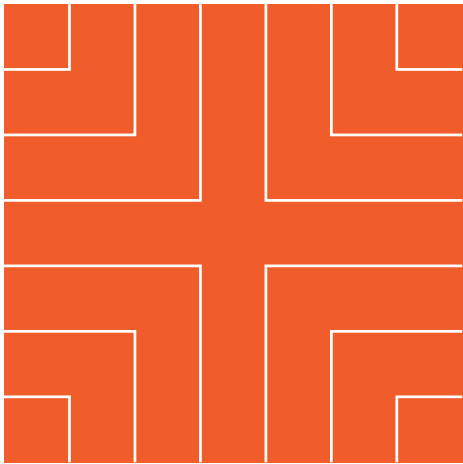


T H E G A R D E N W A L L



WILLEY HOUSE RESTORATION JOURNAL VOLUME 2 ■ ISSUE 4 ■ FALL 2003 ■ ■ ■






THE STATE OF THE HOUSE FALL 2003

Metal cladding on the trellis as intended by Wright, roof repairs phase one, casting original door pulls, and a further education in the black art of brick making.

In an episode of correspondence between Nancy Willey and her architect, Wright suggested that the new detail for the trellis be used in place of his earlier drawings. In a Western Union Telegram of September 15, 1934 he wrote "TRELLIS WRONG STOP WAIT FOR CORRECTION". On September 18th he sent a new drawing he referred to as "Detail for the working of the trellis as a gutter" "The trellis will carry rainwater from the living room roof away from the doors as originally intended." On September 20th again he mentions the gutter system "The gutter plan of the trellis takes care of the water so the thresholds below can remain as they are. This is no change but merely the correct interpretation of the details originally made." The original trellis was apparently well under way or already completed. Near the end of her wits and undoubtedly her budget, Nancy Willey did not make the change. Until this fall, the cantilevered trellis never had the integrated gutter that Wright belatedly intended. When bolstering the slumping trellis we made

allowance for the addition of his wonderful and we hope, functional gutter detail. Though it added considerable complexity to the metal fabrication the gutter system has at last been beautifully executed by the Rainville-Carlson company and seems to be up to the task of rerouting the torrent that flows down from the shed roof during a rainstorm. 




Water test of the integral gutter system.



ROOF RESTORATION

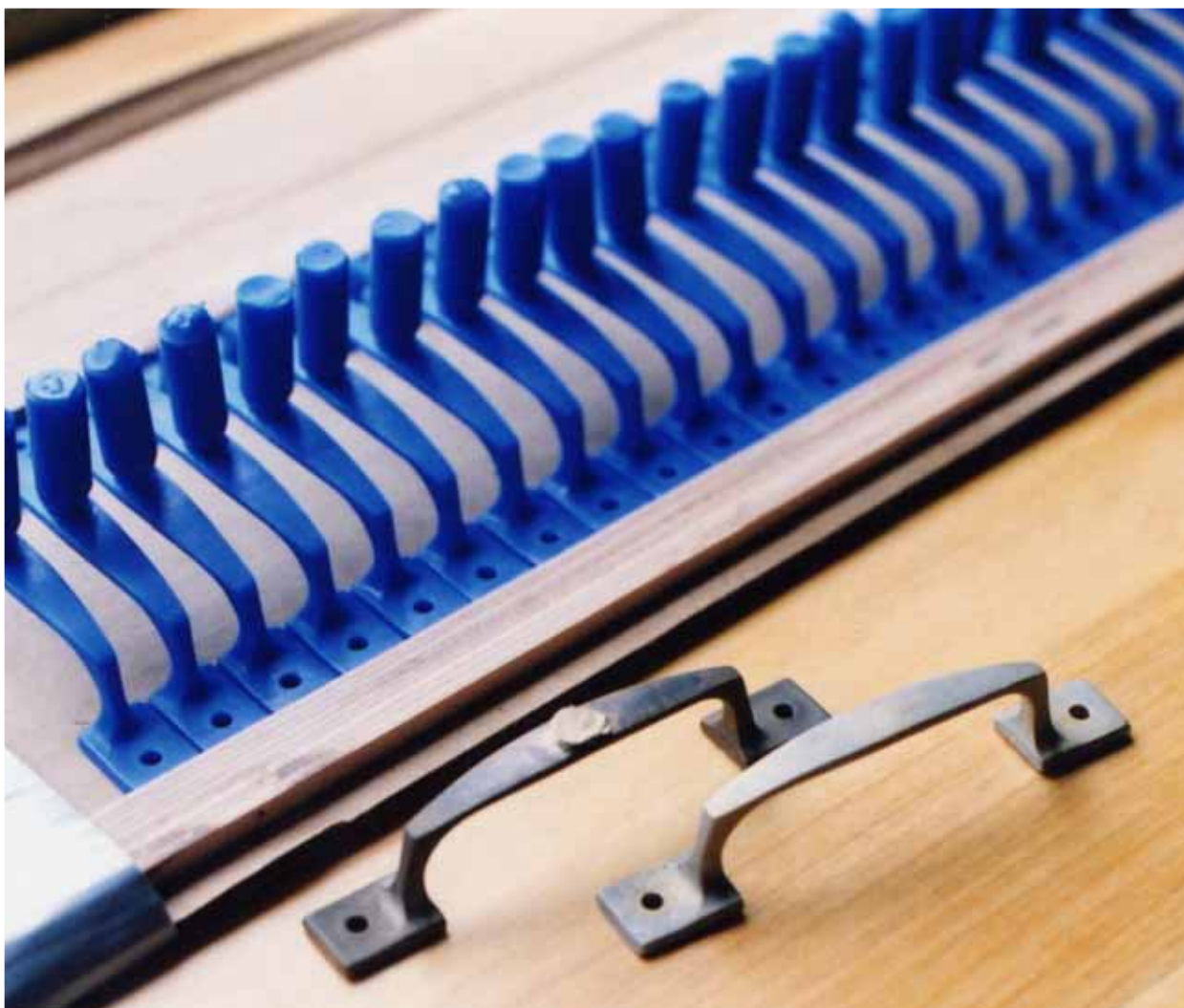
Section by section while the weather held out, the roof was stripped of its cedar shakes and sheathing. Batts of Rock Wool insulation were removed, spaces vacuumed out and bad rafters replaced one by one. The roof proceeded as far as the living room before threat of snow forced Stafford and Joshua to cloak the house in rubber

roofing for the winter. In spring time work will commence where it left off. The roof will be insulated with an environmentally friendly expanding foam insulation and a new shake roof will be put down complete with the original braided hip detail. 



A craftsman solders the lapped joints on the sheet copper between the skylights. New copper cladding on the trellis. Evidence of rodents and water permeation in the Rock Wool batting. Original Rock Wool loosely packed between rafters. After removal of old Rock Wool batts the cavities are vacuumed out. Exposed roof structure showing new rafters. Joshua stripping cedar shakes off the roof. Roof hip above bedroom/bathroom closets.






Kitchen door pulls in three forms, a line of waxes ready for casting, a cast bronze pull with sprue and a cast pull ready to be plated.

DOOR HARDWARE


There is nothing special about the door hardware in the Willey house. It was available off-the-shelf in 1934. But, like so many other things, our missing Crane radiators for instance, simply couldn't be found through any salvage source. The alternative was to cast replacements. The original kitchen pulls were aluminum and the few remaining badly distorted. The rest of the house utilized iron pulls with a black Bower Barff finish. These pulls used on base cabi-

nets in the dining area were all mysteriously missing. The reason being we determined, is that the doors open downward at a surprising angle. The contact point between door and floor was occupied by the brittle iron pulls that shattered when they contacted the brick floor just a little too hard. The replacements are cast in bronze and should last for centuries. Molds and waxes were made by jeweler Gail Grabow, metal was cast by Casting Creations. 



BRICK RESTORATION

The brick restoration stopped short of completion last summer for lack of appropriate bricks. The Willey House uses two types, three if you count the modern terrace brick. The house originally was built with alternating courses of sand mold brick from Memomonie, Wisconsin and a harder Twin Cities shale brick that had a sheen to it. The effect of the alternating brick created a series of horizontal bands running the length of the house, at once subtle and striking. Neither brick has been manufactured for decades. However a good salvage source was found at last for the sand mold bricks. The local bricks continue to allude us. Modern brick is referred to as "modular" size and measures 7 5/8" in length. The original brick that comprises the Willey house was approximately 8" long. The 8" size is found today only in pavers. Thus, there is a reasonable facsimile that works fine and is easily

replaceable for the terrace bricks. Custom brick tests have been made for us in Tennessee but the process seems to be more of an art than a science. Turn around times are long and results vary in degree of success. In all fairness, a vast number of variables account for the impossibly rich variations in regional brick. Not the least of these is the clay itself, add to that the means in which the brick was formed either molded or extruded, the kiln, how the bricks are stacked, firing method and temperature, reduction firings, and additives or glazes. Consider then, that bricks shrink when drying and again while being fired. Lynda Evans of Stone Art was commissioned to create custom brick matches for the fireplace, living room and study thresholds and the top of the garden wall. Watch for the results in future issues of the journal. 



Cutting the area around the living room French doors to accommodate the custom threshold-shaped brick. Latex mold and wooden mock-up threshold brick sent to Stone Art to test bricks before shipping due to critical tolerances. First attempt at the threshold brick. Kiln shrinkage and a slight angle discrepancy made the brick unacceptable for use. Study threshold brick runs the length of house, matching interior floor and exterior terrace. Wooden mock-up of the improved living room brick threshold.



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