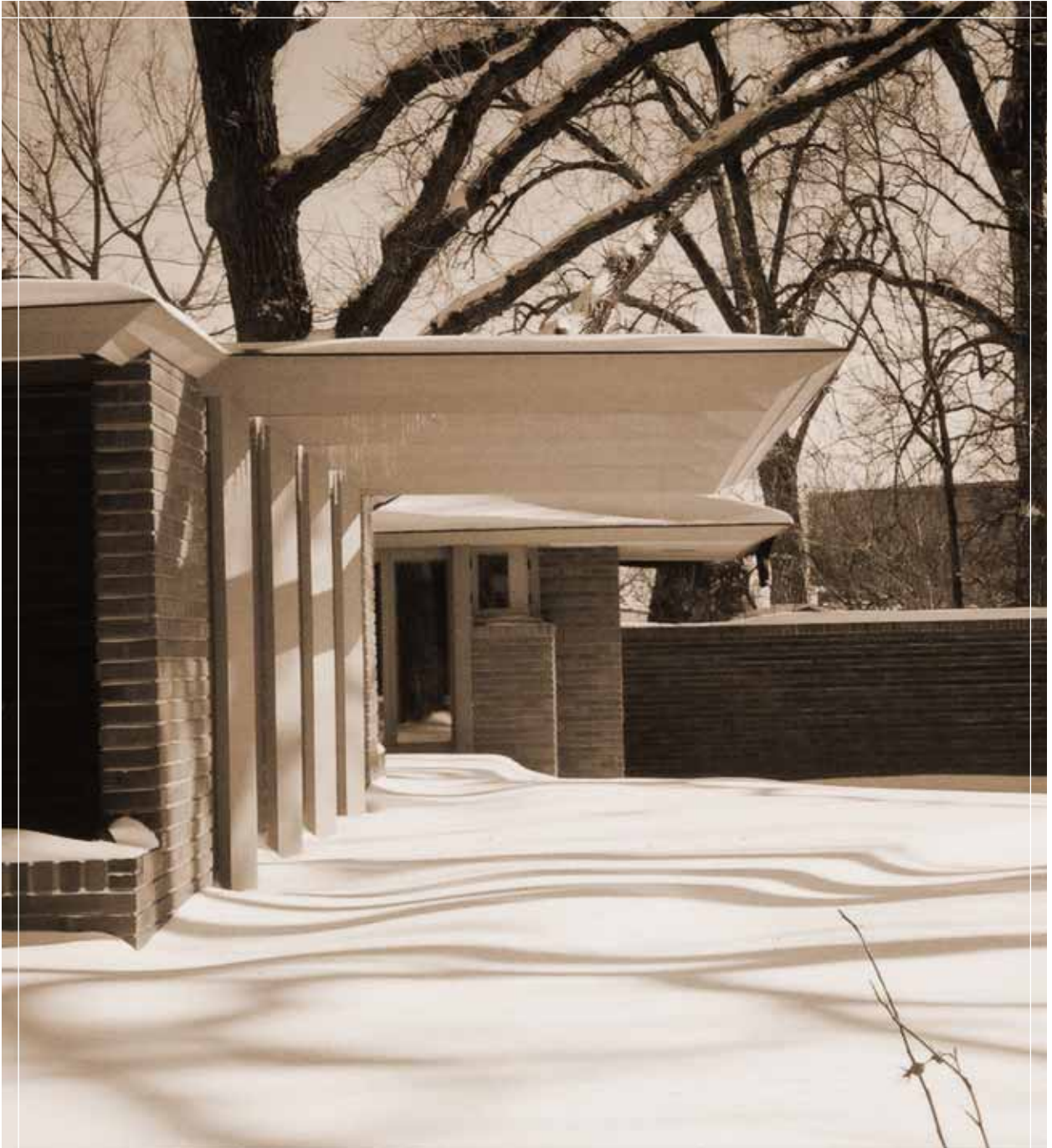
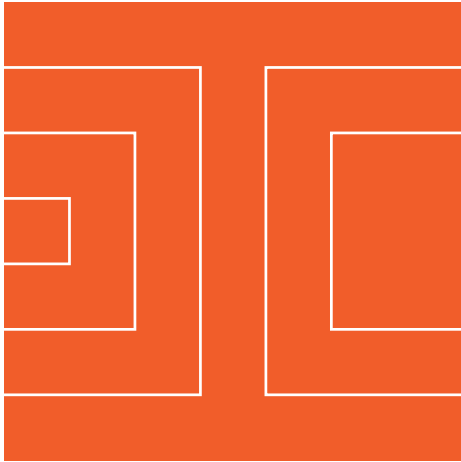


T H E G A R D E N W A L L



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THE STATE OF THE HOUSE WINTER 2004 - 05

The living room ceiling is freshly skim-coated, the storage room plastered for the first time, a lighting scheme for both rooms, wood finishing and a bath nearing completion at long last.

The cathedral ceiling rises from 6' 8" to 13'. A persistent leak over the years near the chimney mass cracked and weakened the plaster. Roof repairs done last summer have cleared the way for final plaster repair and a fresh skim-coat. To prepare for this the ceiling bands or marking strips were carefully measured, removed and labeled. Many were already marked from earlier removals. A stain preventative paint was applied to the damaged plaster prior to patching.

The entranceway ceiling had been exposed for years where leaks caused the plaster to come down. Even before repairs were completed the effect of the low ceiling in this part of the room was restored. The 6' 8" height creates a continuous compression from the exterior soffit above the entry and into the living room where it suddenly rises upward to double the height. The room was painted to match the original specified plaster color.



Loose plaster is scraped away. Kilz stain preventative paint is applied before plaster is repaired and skim-coated.

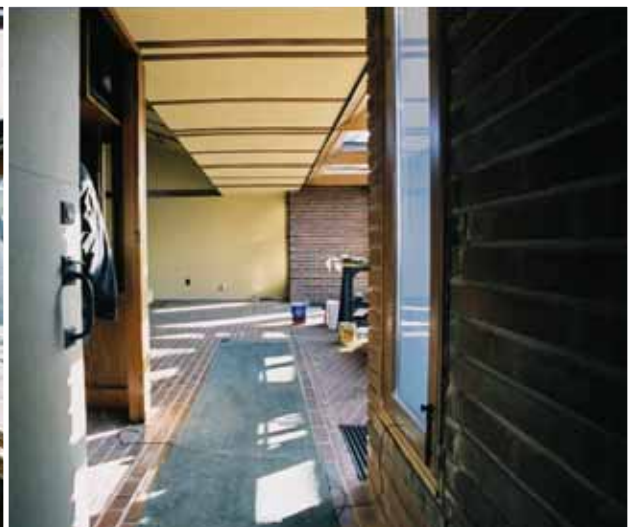
The marking strips were cleaned, finished, waxed and nailed back in place. The overall effect is gratifying and magnificent beyond its scale. 🏠

Following is a photo essay on winter restoration accomplishments at the Willey House.





A single banding strip is laid over metal plaster lath to calculate final plaster thickness.






New skim-coat of plaster makes the living room feel refreshed.



LIGHTING SCHEME

Recessed soffit deck lighting lends a soft even glow to the living room dining alcove. Spot puck lights are staged on the narrow decks adjacent to the brick fireplace mass. 



Living room lighting scheme, recessed into decks.






Top L: The unfinished ceiling of the storage room is insulated. Top R: Blue board up as a base for skim-coat. Soffit deck in position. Middle L and R: Ductwork and mechanicals are in place for the air handling unit. Bottom: Finished plaster.

STORAGE ROOM

The storage room above the garage was to be finished in plaster according to the blueprints. Although the brickwork was meticulously detailed with red colored head joints, pointed up flush with the brick to match all of the finished areas of the house, the plaster was never hung. The single ceramic utility light fixture in the middle of the

low peaked ceiling has been replaced with recessed soffit deck lighting to match the same in the living room dining alcove. Ultimately the deck will extend over shelving and casework. The ceiling adorned with marking strips to match the terminating bands found in the master bedroom, at the extreme opposite end of the house. 



BATHROOM

The bath is taking shape. Mirrors that were hung last fall are now framed with refinished wooden shelves and integrated sienna color plaster. The closet has been fitted with shelves and lighting. The vanity, radiator cover and integrated lighting are being refined and finalized. Unidentified ceiling marking strips were found by Stafford in the garage and are complete save one small piece to be replaced. What was perhaps the least inspiring of rooms in the house will soon be one of the richest, as mirrors expand the boundaries of the space, light fixtures are moved to originally specified positions and details are applied to the whole. 📐

Cypress components for final vanity light fixture.



Prototype lighting over vanity.



Vanity, radiator cover and shelf reflected in vanity mirror.



Final effect of the vanity lighting.



Closet door hinge (left) is nickel plated. Hallway door hinge is polished stainless steel.



Hallway knobs are blackened steel, while all hardware within the bath is polished nickel.



Ceiling marking strips braced into position.





Cleaned cabinet doors.



Refinished doors and newly cast pulls on storage cupboards in dining alcove.

WOOD FINISHING

Wood finishing is ideal winter work. After plaster repair and paint was completed it was appropriate to begin wood finishing in earnest. Age, wear and tear and in some cases direct exposure to water, made it necessary to clean or refinish all woodwork in the house. Add to that the replacement of missing or seriously damaged wood and total refinishing was the only conceivable way to match new surfaces to old. Even after extensive cleaning and finishing, the wood trim still retains a genuine patina of age to it. Great pains were taken to make new wood feel authentic to the house. Individual boards were hand selected to match grain and color to adjacent wood.

Only old-growth Red Tidewater Cypress has been used in the restoration of the Willey House. With few exceptions the wood comes from logs salvaged from southern rivers where they sank during the period of heavy commercial logging operations some 60 to 100 years ago. As mentioned in earlier journals, Red Tidewater Cypress is photo reactive. Wood with any degree of exposure to sunlight has darkened with age and exposure, much like a film negative. One fascinating example of this was noted in the bathroom which has one small window. The window

has a sheltered eastern exposure and casts a faint perpendicular light on the closet door. When the door was removed for refinishing we noticed that the shadow of the door knob was burned into the face of the door. Ghost images like this are seen throughout the house and tell the same story.

Most wood needed only to be cleaned with alcohol, shellacked and waxed. However, to match new wood to old in situations where the original was beyond redemption, such as below the living room skylights, some original wood needed to be stripped bare and lightly sanded to reach a medium tone that could somewhat be matched to.

Nailing the ceiling bands and base shoe back in place has given the rooms a feeling of finish to them. Although built-ins and furniture are yet to be constructed, it is evident that real progress has been made. The only two wooden floors in the house, the bedrooms, are both made of 9" wide cypress planks. They had been planed down and protected with rosin paper for the past couple of years. This winter the floors were hand sanded and finished. Good riddance to the rosin paper. 📍



Ghost showing position of top on radiator cover in dining alcove.



Cypress ghosts of interior screw hinges on door frame.



An untouched section of trim below the skylights shows ultimate cocoa brown of cypress exposed to direct sunlight.



Construction of solid core kitchen Dutch door.



Original hinge box from Ben Straugham Hardware in Minneapolis, used as a shim.



Construction of living room closet door, plywood with 1/4" cypress veneer both sides.



Construction of solid core interior door.





Bedroom thresholds: finish split between exterior stain and interior shellac.



Hand sanding the cypress plank floors.

Finished guest bedroom floor.





Top: Base shoe design is very similar to one used at Tallesin, in Spring Green, Wisconsin.
Bottom: Base shoe at coat closet.



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