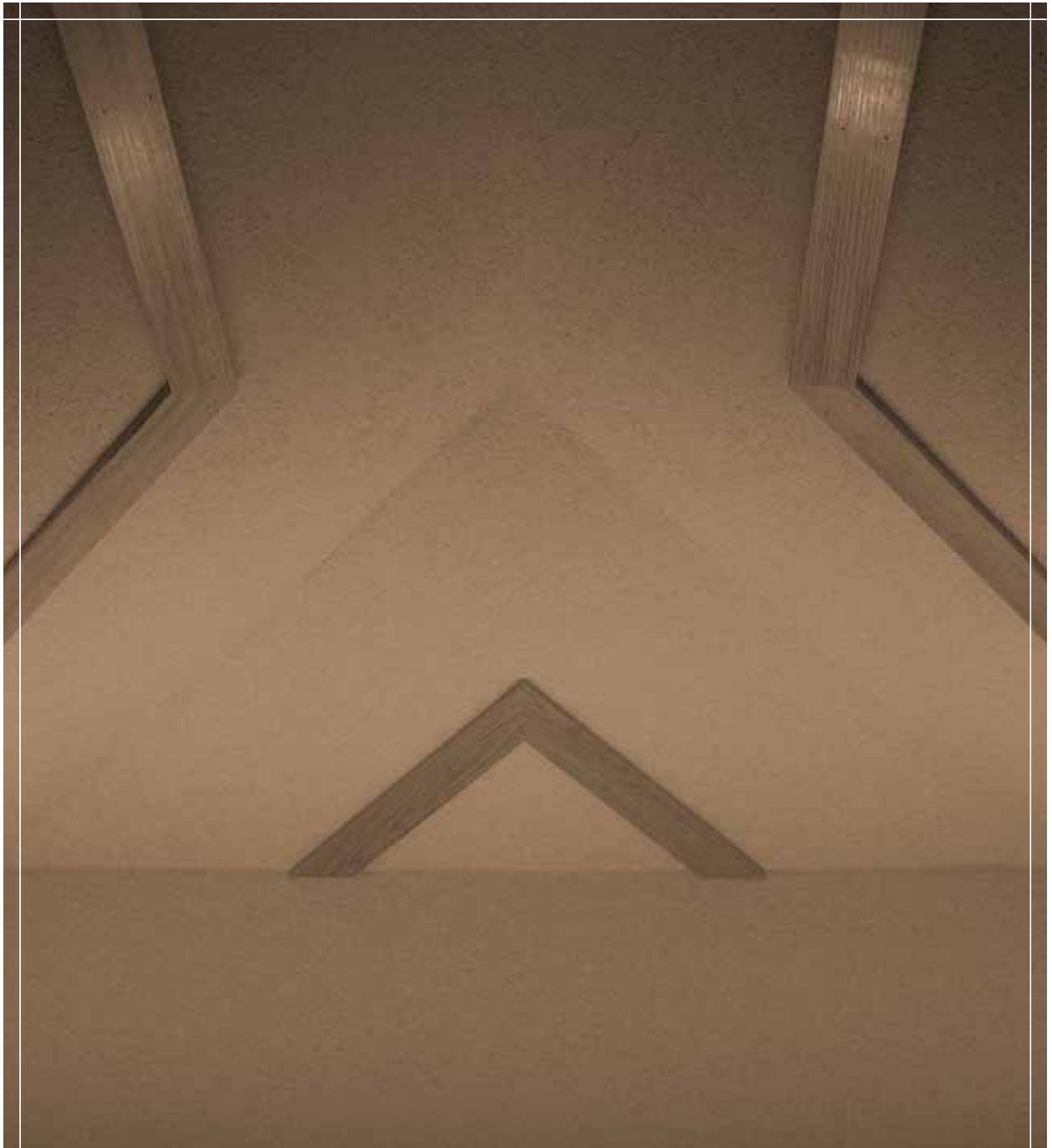
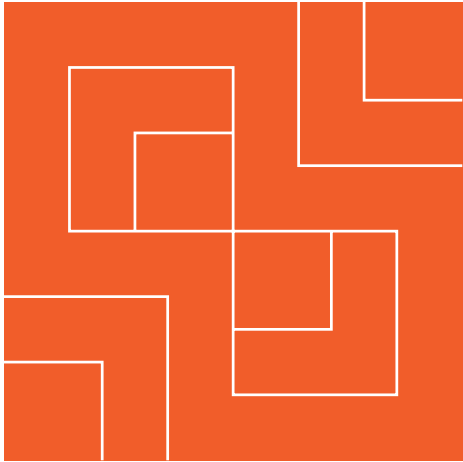


T H E G A R D E N W A L L



WILLEY HOUSE RESTORATION JOURNAL VOLUME 5 ■ ISSUE 1 ■ WINTER/SPRING 2006 ■ ■ ■





THE STATE OF THE HOUSE WINTER / SPRING 2006

The storage room above the garage becomes a test site for future kitchen cabinetry and linoleum flooring. In the process it is transformed from derelict storeroom into a beautiful small living space, suitable for use as an office or entertainment den. The bathroom is 100% complete. The first room in the house we can truly say is done.

This volume of the Restoration Journal may be referred to in the future as the “lost issue” since it has been so ridiculously long in coming that I’m certain many of you have simply given up hope of ever seeing it. By now everyone is accustomed to an issue being late, but 12 months late is hopelessly tardy. For that we apologize as we try to catch up on nearly a year’s worth of belated journals. As you’ll see for yourself we have not yet been defeated nor have we lost momentum. In fact we have been busier than ever as the restoration project makes the final turn into the home stretch.



Light mast and soffit at the vanity.



STORAGE ROOM


In Frank Lloyd Wright's blueprints for the Willey House, the area above the garage, accessed by a covered outside staircase is simply labeled STORAGE. It was called out as a plaster room with a very low pitched ceiling. The plastering was never executed. Instead, the room was left with a 2 x 4 rafter ceiling and bare stud walls. The brick knee walls however were completed with raked horizontal joints and colored flush-pointed butt joints, identical to the rest of the house. The same level of brick finishing is true of the inside of the garage. So despite the fact that the ceiling and walls were never plastered we have learned first-hand how expensive the tuck-pointing is and so must assume that the room was always intended to be finished space at some point in time.

Because we elected to install a high pressure Unico Air Conditioning system in the house, we needed to find a place for the air handling equipment to reside. We settled on creating a storage compartment within the garage attic space (see Vol. 4, Issue 1) since it was really the only option. Building codes mandated the space be fully insulated and the walls and ceiling finished. It only stood to reason that if it was to be finished it should be done in plaster. The same Icenene spray foam insulation was used in the storage room and troweled plaster was used for the finished wall and ceiling surfaces.

Since the room was going to be insulated we figured it may as well be air conditioned. The inclusion of a single vent effectively cools the space in summer. And again it stood to reason that if the room was going to be air

conditioned then it had better be heated for winter use. Cast iron baseboard radiators were added along both walls to make the room functional year-round. The radiators are supplied hot water from the boiler in the basement. The pipes fed through a channel for the original purpose of heating the garage.

The enclosure for the AC air handling equipment was designed as cabinetry that could roll out, providing easy access to the machinery while rendering it invisible at all other times. The cabinets were built using a combination of cypress plywood and solid cypress boards just as the originals were made up. This is the first significant use of the cypress plywood that Stafford and Josh made on their vacuum press. It utilizes an attractive veneer with highly repetitive cathedral figuring. Ordinarily this grain pattern would be to a wood-workers delight. However, the Willey House was not built to a cabinetry standard that consistently featured book-matched veneers. Instead the wood grain is wildly random and even visually disruptive at times. We hope to source some old-growth veneer that has a less-regular pattern in the future. For now we feel blessed to have any old-growth veneer to work with at all.

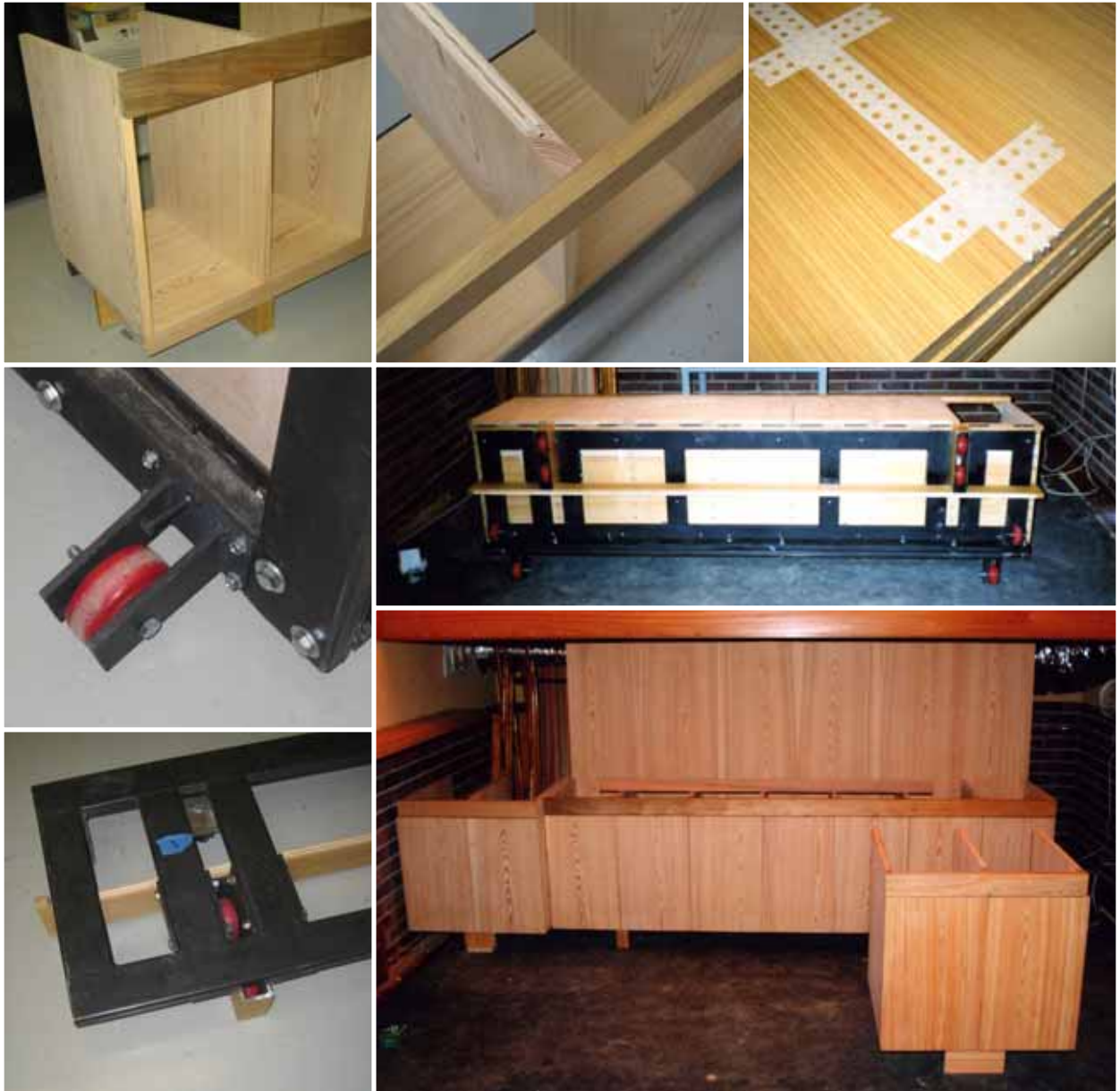
Heavy duty metal frame and silicone wheeled casters were used to make the unit mobile. The reflected ceiling band pattern that continues across all ceilings in the house is applied in the storage room also. Here it mirrors the manner in which the ceiling terminates in the master bedroom at the far opposite end of the house. 





A life-size mock-up of the cabinetry done in scrap sheet foam insulation leftover from another project. A band runs around the top of the walls to bring the room into visual harmony with the house. Cast iron radiators run along both sides to the room.





Cabinets were made with drop front doors identical to the dining room cabinets. Construction is same as those original to the house. Veneers are taped before being glued and vacuum-pressed to the plywood cores. Casters and a heavy steel frame are employed to move the cabinet unit out for AC access. Cabinets were assembled at an off-site shop and moved into place in sections.



Veneer top is a match between cabinet sections.

All shelves have steel bracket supports.



Finished cabinetry.



BATHROOM

Finishing touches have been applied to the bathroom of the Willey House. The original tub has been restored, a correct period sink from the same Crane fixture collection has been sourced and installed. A suitable toilet was located that aesthetically fits the other components but is by American Standard and is of somewhat later manufacture. It is the best we have been able to do to date. All hardware was restored and replated. Accessory pieces were designed to fit the room and nickel chrome plated to match. The formerly dingy room is now flooded with abundant light and has mirrors set at the outside corners of the room similar to what Wright used in his own bathrooms at Taliesin. The infinity effect produced by mirrors on opposing parallel walls virtually explodes the tiny dimensions of the room much as the corner windows do elsewhere in the house when flung open. 📷



The completed bath. Note infinity corner and original light fixtures.





Built-in vanity at North East corner. Light mast and soffit at the vanity. The translucent glass used in both is a flashed glass. This is a technique used in art glass and architectural glass. It is a clear glass sheet that has a second color, in this case white opaque applied when still hot to one side of the sheet. Our white opaque is on the inside of the light fixtures. A glossy clear is on the exterior. Vanity top with flush mirror and light mast. Infinity effect between mirrors.





Toilet paper dispenser based on the square module, built from 1/2 steel stock. Door pull based on square module. Towel rod based on the square module.





Sink faucet and valves, restored and replated. Tub faucet and valves, restored and replated. Original shower rod, replated in nickel chrome. Restored tub. Colored cement shower surround.



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