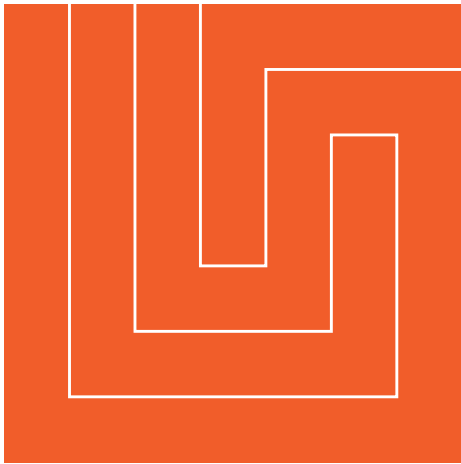


T H E G A R D E N W A L L




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THE STATE OF THE HOUSE FALL 2006

The bedrooms formerly plain plaster rooms take on a new richness of character. Hitherto unknown furniture designs grace the Willey House. A gnawing problem is solved at least temporarily. And a sprite makes an appearance in the garden.

The bedrooms at the Willey House have always been pretty ordinary in comparison to the drama and varied materials of the living room. After we discovered the furniture and built-ins that were rendered for those spaces we understood just what the rooms were crying out for, completion! The master bedroom and guest room have several things in common; plywood headboards, shelves that run above the low flat platform beds and curious end tables that are quite unlike anything we have seen in a Wright house before. As has been our history over the course of this restoration we have been surprised how one aspect of the work demands that another seemingly unrelated task must be completed simultaneously. The master bedroom had a long shelf designed for it that begins as the top of a highboy dresser and runs into a set of corner windows at the opposite end of the room. The shelf then takes an abrupt 90 degree turn and terminates at the wall inside of a seating alcove. When it was time to mount the shelves we thought it was a convenient time to replace a window sill that was badly gnawed by squirrels. As is now considered the norm, the removal of the sill and frame turned out to be exceedingly difficult and could never have been accomplished once the headboard shelf was in place. We might be catching on to the interrelationships within Organic Architecture and learning to anticipate some of these things. 



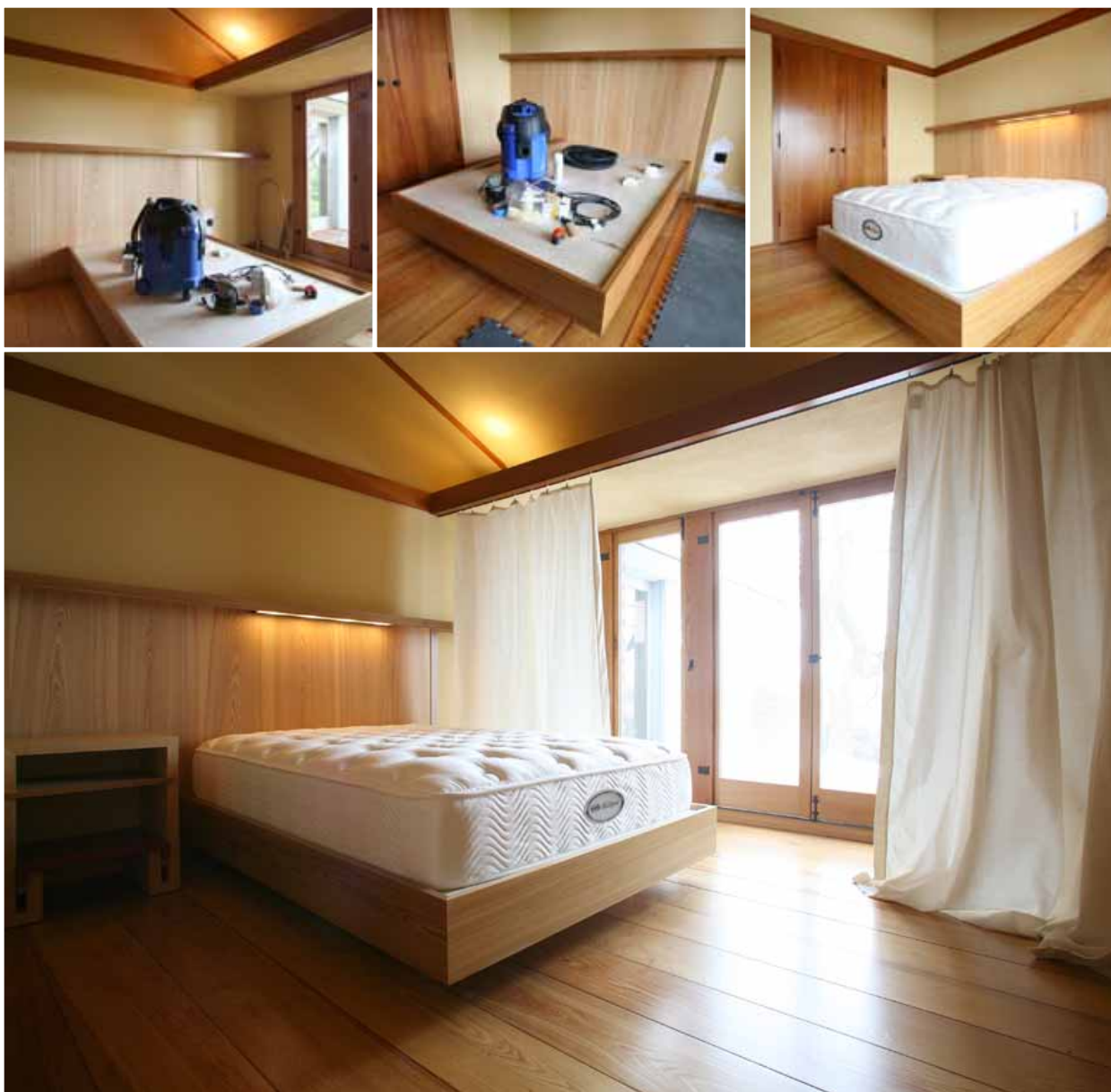
THE HEADBOARDS

Both bedrooms have large plywood headboards. The only available veneer is still a bit too repetitive to suit our taste. Some effort was made to select from different parts of the veneer and stagger the pattern in order to create a more random appearance but we still are not entirely happy with the materials we have to work with. Stafford is constantly searching for other options. Promising leads arise only to descend with a thud once we pursue them to their disappointing and inevitable ends. This of course reminds us that we can't control everything and it makes us happy once again to have any old-growth veneer at all, and we press on. No pun intended. 🍷



Guest bedroom sans furniture.






The addition of the plywood headboard/shelf, platform bed and curtain rod.



Cypress slabs cut, glued and ready to assemble.



NIGHT STANDS


Specified as being cut from thick slabs of cypress the night stands are as heavy as they appear. Each leg touches the floor and curls back upwards cradling a “breakfast tray” specified to be lacquered red. Since this design was just prior to any red being referred to as Cherokee Red by Frank Lloyd Wright our red will match the original linoleum of the house, which as it turns out is a perfect match to Cherokee Red as it appeared in 1936 at Fallingwater. 



Nightstand constructed from solid cypress slabs. Red breakfast tray is removable.



CURTAIN RODS

The guest bedroom uses a surface track for curtains that is a match to the living room. The curtains slide along the bottom of the deck, clear of the arc of the opening internal screens. The height and location is exactly the same as the living room curtains. The master bedroom however is a different matter. From the number of holes in the walls and woodwork it was pretty obvious that many attempts at a curtain solution were tested over the decades. Likely, none of them were particularly successful because none remained when we acquired the house. The challenge has been to find a way to hang curtains that also allows for the opening of interior screen windows and doors. Our solution for the curtains at the French doors was to set the rod high enough so the doors could swing beneath it and the curtains be pulled back out of the way of the doors. The rod wraps around the corner to address the corner windows on the garden side of the bed room. Easy. The other corner windows however are under the deck and there is very little space between them and the ceiling (deck bottom). Here we engineered rods to appear to be like the fixed rod across the room, however they separate at the corner and hinge out to allow the opening of the windows. 



Fabricated curtain rod at the master bedroom French doors.



Curtain rod at the corner of French doors and corner windows.




Opposite side corner windows use matching rods that pivot to allow window access.



Bi-fold shutters



SHUTTERS

The Willeys abandoned a shutter design for the tall and narrow East window in favor of a screen window. A good decision in 1934 when it was necessary not to mention safer than today, to keep your windows open over the long hot summer for the cross ventilation they provide. We are much less inclined to keep the windows open today, particularly any window that is as big and inviting as a door. Since the house is now air conditioned we reverted back to Wright's original scheme for the window which was a Dutch-door style shutter. Wright's drawing shows the shutter opening over the highboy. We foresaw disaster and instead built ours to bi-fold toward the closet where it nests perfectly without danger of colliding with the closet door or anything on top of the highboy. 



Master bedroom prior to built-ins. Set up for an event.



Mark Hertzberg



Ceiling bands



Window seat radiator cover fits into alcove. Faceplate not yet in place.



Base shoe, similar to one used at Taliesin in Spring Green.

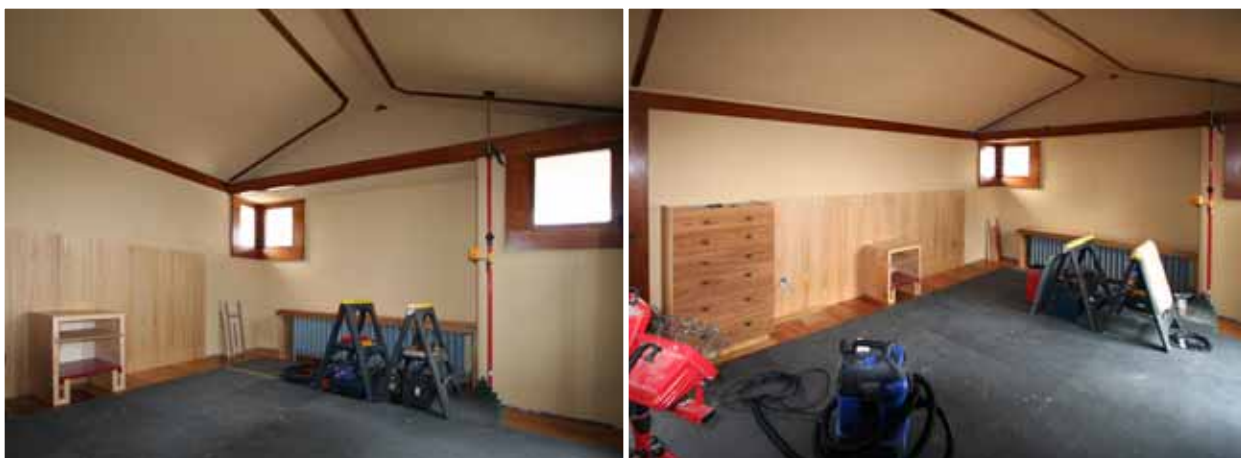


Base shoe runs around foot of highboy and back to bottom of headboard.



Another angle on the ceiling bands. Bands run 9 inches off of the apex of the ceiling peak.





Headboard, highboy dresser, window seat/radiator cover and shelf in place.



Highboy



Original metal vent and new cypress vent to air space under floor. Since the bed rests directly over the opening a flush mounted vent solution was required.



Shelf over headboard extends to window.



Steel bracket supports.



Bed in place draped in fabric and curtain samples.





View of master bedroom with temporary curtains in place.



Squirrel-damaged window sill. Note kerfed saw cuts in bottom of board to prevent warping.



Damaged sill.



New window sill and frame from inside bedroom. Note original wall color under the interior trim.



With frame removed the wall structure is revealed. From inside: paint, colored plaster, scratch coat plaster, fiberboard, furring strip, brick and nailer block, stain on exterior brick showing where the window frame ends.



Squirrel-damaged corner window prior to replacement.





New window sill and frame.



Josh working on the corner window.



Detail showing where corner windows meet the exterior bedroom soffit.



Original sill was hand hewn at the back to fit.



Historic record of leakage, new paint, old paint and tinted plaster.





Nighttime exteriors.





A Midway Gardens Sprite finds its place under the eaves in a location where plants won't grow for lack of water.



C R E D I T S

Home Owners: Steve Sikora
Lynette Erickson-Sikora
Restoration/Supervision: Stafford Norris III
Apprentice: Joshua Norris
Website/Journal Design: Design Guys
John Moes/Design
Jerry Stenback/Production
Kelly Munson/Design and Programming

C O N T A C T S

Website: thewilleyhouse.com
E-mail: info@thewilleyhouse.com
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