



Left: An aerial shot of Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West circa 1950; Above: The drafting room circa 1940.

## MASTER PLAN FOR TALIESIN WEST PRESERVES FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S HOME AND SCHOOL IN THE ARIZONA DESERT

### DO THE WRIGHT THING

"The design of Taliesin West is ad hoc, yet fully master planned in every way," said T. Gunny Harboe, principal at Chicago-based Harboe Architects, underscoring the complexity of preserving a structure as protean and contextual as Taliesin West, where building began in 1937 and never stopped. "It is a construction of 80,000 square feet under one roof, and yet is totally integrated with the landscape that surrounds it. The landscape comes into the building, goes out of the building, and is even within the buildings."

Two years ago, the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation commissioned Harboe Architects to create a master plan for the preservation of Wright's

school and home in Scottsdale, Arizona.

The recently completed, 740-page plan outlines strategies to preserve Taliesin West, a structure that Wright and his disciples modified many times over the years without presenting a false sense of history. The plan presents an approach to conserving deteriorating materials, preserving existing spaces, restoring viewscapes lost to new additions and landscaping, and supporting Taliesin West as a tourist site, education center, and foundation headquarters.

"One of the real challenges," Harboe said, "was that this place was a seasonal camp. When Wright would arrive each fall, he would start

messing with things." Wright would have one of his "go-to boys" redo a window, or whole rooms. The changes were mostly unphotographed and undocumented.

The plan has four primary objectives: identify what needs to be restored or preserved, and why; determine intensity of preservation for different components of the site (and preservation Plan B's, if adequate resources are unavailable); estimate the cost; and determine what needs care immediately. Bridgeton, New Jersey-based engineers Watson & Henry Associates and the Philadelphia office of historic preservation firm Building Conservation Associates collaborated with Harboe on the plan.

To see how Taliesin West evolved, the team consulted over 6,000 photographs and construction documents at Columbia University's Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library. They wanted to get a sense of the

materials and textures that finished art photos don't depict.

Through site surveys, the team pieced together what had been constructed (or reconstructed) and when. The building of Taliesin West can be separated into four periods: the 1937 groundbreaking and the construction of the core campus (through 1945), a major postwar expansion to accommodate more students (1946 to 1959, the year Wright died), after Wright's death (1960 to 1985), and when the foundation's offices were added (1986–2014). Harboe consulted visitor services (the site attracts 100,000 architecture enthusiasts per year), the school on site, and "legacy groups," students who were at Taliesin West with Wright, to gain insight into how the space was shaped over time.

Harboe's team used results from the site survey and the interviews to divide the property into four zones: the first designates areas of crucial significance, mostly built during Wright's lifetime, while zone four

comprises areas of "minor significance."

The zone one drafting studio is one of the first buildings the preservation team will work on. The roof of the drafting studio, for example, was originally made of canvas. In the mid 1960s, the canvas was replaced by fiberglass. In the mid-1990s, the fiberglass roof was replaced by acrylic. Work will repair the leaky roof leaks, stabilize wood beams, and repair desert masonry. They will also remove excess vegetation and masonry to restore views of the surrounding mountains.

Originally, the buildings were more open to the landscape. Rooms were designed for passive cooling, while shades controlled ventilation and sun shading. In the 1950s, glass enclosures created a fixed envelope that allowed for indoor climate control in the 1960s. However, Harboe noted that preservation may entail the removal of some contemporary comforts—like air conditioning—to restore the environmentally responsive original design. **AW**

## SUNSET PARK'S SOUTH BROOKLYN MARINE TERMINAL TO BE REACTIVATED

### THE FEW, THE PORT, THE MARINE



The South Brooklyn Marine Terminal (SBMT) is now up for grabs. On Thursday, November 5, Maria

Economic Development Corporation (EDC), announced that the agency is seeking bidders for a 39-year lease on the currently unused

waterfront site in Sunset Park.

"The 72-acre South Brooklyn Marine Terminal is the only maritime site in Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island with direct access to rail, making it a vital component of the city's manufacturing and waterfront infrastructure and a location primed to open waterfront access to businesses throughout New York City," Torres-Springer told *AN*.

The reactivation of the port is in line with the city's 197-A plan and the 2009 Sunset Park Waterfront Vision Plan, which looks for ways to update the area's "antiquated industrial infrastructure and develop Sunset Park into a 21<sup>st</sup> century model for diverse, dense and environmentally-sustainable industry."

Earlier this year, a scuffle between

Mayor Bill de Blasio and the City Council—specifically councilman Carlos Menchaca who reportedly lost his place as co-chairman in the Brooklyn Democratic Party as a result—nearly killed the proposal to revive the terminal. Adjustments, such as cutting down the original 50-year lease and agreeing to redirect five percent of the site's rental revenue to a community fund, allowed the groups to reach a compromise and move forward.

New York City's economic health is reliant on transporting goods and, according to the EDC, efficiencies of scale are crucial due to the large size of the port and metro region. In 2014, the Port generated over \$21.2 billion in personal income and \$53.5 billion in business income. Due to the

SBMT's easy access to rail, the city expects that even as activity grows, moving cargo directly from barges to trains can reduce traffic congestion. One barge can hold the equivalent of up to 58 trailer trucks and one rail car can hold the equivalent of up to four trucks. Shifting cargo to a barge and rail system also comes with environmental benefits. According to the EDC, one gallon of fuel can move one ton of cargo 514 miles by boat and 450 miles by train, compared to 59 miles by truck—statistics that factor into the city's sustainability agenda as well.

The EDC will be releasing a Request for Proposals in the upcoming weeks and subsequent time lines will depend on the tenant and negotiations. **OM**