



Is there a connection between John Nash and Frank Lloyd Wright?

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Name: Jaycie Corbett

Student Number: 2004014

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the unusual comparison of architects John Nash (1752-1835) and Frank Lloyd Wright (1867- 1959), from different eras and philosophies, brought together to consider their Welsh identity.

Although neither was born in Wales, their Welsh heritage was dominant in shaping the lives of both individuals. This dissertation therefore, identifies the importance of Wales, its history and language, as part of the legacy of both architects and also considers the previously unexplored comparisons of Nash and Wright's buildings with historical buildings of the Welsh countryside.

Three methods of research have been employed in this work. Primarily and for the most part, archival and library research has led to many previously unexplored nuggets of information. In addition, interviews with key people and site visits to existing buildings of both architects, has demonstrated that there were overlaps in their work, with new information and new leads investigated.

Chapter one explores the early life and Welsh background of both architects, with Chapter two discussing the Welsh identity of Nash and Wright, with particular reference to Nash and the Picturesque movement. Chapter three brings together the philosophies of the Picturesque movement and Organic architecture as developed by Wright, and Chapter four considers the Picturesque in America, and explores how Nash's designs were taken to North America, adapted and developed, thereby connecting with Wright's ethos of Organic architecture. The Chapters in turn discuss the connection between Nash and Wright with the common factors being Wales, Italy, landscape architects and nature.

Through the exploration of the case studies, the findings provided key evidence of how Nash and Wright were similar in their philosophical approach, innovation and working methods. In addition, an analysis of key influencers was undertaken as part of this study.

The conclusion reveals whether (or not) Nash's and Wright's legacy is part of the Welsh dynamic.

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Introduction

This dissertation sets out to establish whether there is a connection between the works of John Nash and Frank Lloyd Wright, and to explore an unusual comparison between two world renowned architects from different eras and philosophies. Seen together as a Welsh identity, this dissertation identifies the importance of Wales as part of the legacy of both architects and studies the previously unexplored alternative source to their inspiration, through buildings of the Welsh countryside. This paper also explores the connections of Nash and Wright to West Wales and whether their Welsh heritage was significant to each individual and how was this heritage expressed in their work.

Comparisons are drawn between Nash and Wright regarding their innovation, cross disciplinary working methods, professional work relationships, Italian influences and nature.

A study was also conducted to investigate Nash and Wright's philosophical approach. Focusing on the origins and the development of Nash's Picturesque style buildings, looking at how his designs were taken to North America, adapted and developed, connecting with Wright's transitions from the Prairie style to his ethos of Organic architecture.

Aims and Objectives

The two main aims of this dissertation are to investigate and identify the connections between John Nash and Frank Lloyd Wright in terms of design, philosophy, innovation and influences, and also to understand the Welsh heritage for both architects, discussing further the influence of Welsh architecture upon their work.

The dissertation will address the following objectives:

- Establish the similarities in the works of Nash and Wright.
- Consider how Welsh heritage shaped the work of Nash and Wright, professionally and socially.
- Identify the elements of Welsh architecture in the work of Nash and Wright and understand how these elements are expressed, with particular reference to the Picturesque, the Prairie style and Organic architecture.
- Establish how the works of Nash and Wright are connected.

Methodology

For the research of this dissertation, I engaged in three different approaches:

1. Detailed library/ documentary research.
2. Interviews with key individuals
3. A number of site visits.

1. Detailed library/ documentary research

Detailed research was undertaken for the dissertation as there were numerous academic books and articles available on both architects.

Furthermore, a study was conducted to investigate the origins and the development of Nash's Picturesque style buildings, examining how his designs were adapted and developed in North America, connecting with Wright's transition from the Prairie style to his ethos of Organic architecture.

Some archival materials were also difficult to access due to the necessary permissions required. The author notes that some historic information was purely absent from the archives, as birth, death and marriage data was only recorded from 1873.

2. Interviews with key individuals

The key person interviewed as part of the research was Dr Geoffrey Tyack MA MLitt Oxford, PhD London, FSA, FRHist.Soc., Emerita/Emeritus Fellow of Kellogg College. In addition, owners of properties, such as Helen Carter at Ffynone Mansion and Shona Prasad of Temple Druid, Maenclochog, shared their valuable knowledge of restoring a 200 year old, Welsh, Nash-designed house.

3. A number of site visits

Site visits proved to be most helpful as there was opportunity to liaise with the people that live in the building and experience the space first-hand. The visits included journeys to Blaenyralltddu, Rhydowen, Llandysul and Llanerchaeron Mansion, Ciliau Aeron, Aberaeron, both in Ceredigion; and Temple Druid, Maenclochog and Ffynone Mansion, Abercych, both in Pembrokeshire. A visit to Blaise Hamlet in Henbury, Bristol was an opportunity to experience Nash's varied architectural style and a visit to Fiesole, outside Florence also proved invaluable when discussing the Italian influence for Wright.

Unfortunately a visit to Cronkhill House in Shrewsbury proved impossible as the building is only open to the public a few days a year. Similarly visiting or experiencing any of Wright's American sites was unattainable.

A brief overview of John Nash (1752-1835)

John Nash is portrayed as a Regency Architect and city planner, well known for his formal designs at Buckingham Palace, Brighton Pavilion, Regent Street and Regent's Park, and numerous grand country villas. Besides this work, his style adapted from the neo-classical, to an eclectic mix of Italianate and the romantic Picturesque style, of rural vernacular architecture, which he embraced during his decade spent in Wales.

As an architect to the Prince Regent (later George IV), Nash he had a successful London career, he was innovative, hardworking, sociable, and well-liked. Humphry Repton¹ once described him as having powers of fascination far beyond anyone he had ever met (Suggett, 2009), yet unfortunate events, public scandal and financial ruin were ill-fated threads that weaved through his life, threatened his reputation and caused his retreat to West Wales. In Wales, Nash met influential people and discovered the Picturesque movement, altering the way in which he perceived architecture.

A brief overview of Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959)

"I am Frank Lloyd Wright, the world's greatest Architect", were the self-conceited words used by Wright to describe himself, in 1926 (Barney, 1965, p.149).

Seen as having a lasting influence on contemporary architecture², Wright was innovative with an interest in new methods of construction and materials. Thought of as rebellious and apart from his contemporaries, Wright developed eclectic qualities drawn from the Arts and Crafts movement³, the Shingle style and from Japanese architecture (Scully, 2006). He gained influence from his mentors, Joseph Silsbee⁴ and Louis Sullivan⁵, whom he called the *Leiber Meister*⁶. With Unitarian and Transcendentalist beliefs, inspiration came from God and nature.

¹ Humphry Repton was a landscape gardener (1752-1818) and worked with Nash on many projects including Blaise Hamlet in Bristol. Repton's first book *Sketches and hints in landscape gardening* (1794), is well known, along with his 'red books' of watercolours and plans (for mostly wealthy clients) showing landscape improvements (Limper- Hertz, 2019).

² Graff, 2020.

³ Arts and Crafts movement, known for its use of high-quality, hand-crafted materials, was a reaction against the Industrial Revolution in Britain in 1860's. The designer William Morris became associated with the movement, and by the 1880's he had become internationally renowned. The style spread to America in 1890's and lasted until the 1920's, in different variations (Clericuzio, 2017).

⁴ American architect Joseph Silsbee(1848-1913) was influential to a generation of architects, mostly from the Prairie School, including Wright who worked in Silsbee's Chicago office.

⁵ Known as the father of modernism, Louis Henry Sullivan (1856-1924) was an influential architect of the Chicago school pioneering the principles of Organic architecture.

⁶ Wright worked for Sullivan for many years, and it was at Sullivan's office that Wright designed the Charnley house in 1892. Sullivan loaned Wright money to build his home and studio in Oak Park, but Wright was to leave Sullivan's studio due to a disagreement of Wright taking on private commissions (Wright, 2005). Sullivan played a huge role in shaping Wright's life as an architect, Wright later referred to Sullivan as the '*Leiber Meister*' a German word for 'beloved teacher or dear master' (Freundt, 2016).

Wright possessed strong individuality, traits of his maternal Lloyd Jones family. His ethos was to design a true American architecture, through the domestic development of the Usonian houses, and to develop the ground hugging, Prairie houses. Wright's buildings were conceived from his philosophy of Organic architecture and subsequently, setting up a fellowship programme at his home in Taliesin, Wisconsin.

Similarly, to Nash, success was always interlaced with public scandal, tragedy and financial crisis, and in the same way Nash did, to save his reputation, Wright retreated to Europe, to re-invent himself.

Literature review

A range of works have been used throughout this dissertation.

Three biographies about Nash have been key to this research. *John Nash, Architect in Wales- Pensaer yng Nghymru* by Richard Suggett (1995) gives a thorough and detailed insight to Nash's life and work in Wales. *John Nash: Architect of the Picturesque* edited by Geoffrey Tyack (2013), includes detailed information on Nash's buildings and how the Picturesque movement transformed his work along with the book *Life and Works of John Nash: Architect* by John Summerson (1980).

Wright's own work, *An Autobiography* (first published in 1932) alongside a book by his sister; *The Valley of the God-Almighty Joneses* by Maginel Wright Barney (1965) gives first-hand accounts of their lives and upbringing as members of the Lloyd Jones family. *Frank Lloyd Wright, a Biography* by Meryle Secrest (1998) was also helpful as Secrest had access to archival material and had interviewed a range of Wright's connections and family members to confirm the detailed accuracy of his life.

Additionally *Houses of the Welsh Countryside* by Peter Smith (1975) examined a broad area of building typology which allowed successful comparisons between Welsh buildings and the buildings of Nash and Wright.

Chapter 1: Early life and Welsh background

John Nash

John Nash was born in 1752, to a Welsh family from Neath; his birthplace remains controversial, with theories of his birthplace being in any of Neath, Carmarthen, Cardigan and Lambeth. He regarded himself, and by many historians as a Londoner, he had grown up in Lambeth⁷ however, there is no record of a birth or baptism in any parish records.

His father, John Nash senior and his father's cousin, John Edwards senior, both millwrights and engineers, migrated to London from Neath, drawn to the prosperous commercial area on the south bank of the Thames⁸. Nash senior died prematurely in 1772, and according to his will and testament, John Nash, at the age of 20, was already working for Sir Robert Taylor, a leading Architect of the time⁹. Edwards, later becoming Esquire¹⁰, died in 1818, with his gravestone in Lambeth's old burial ground reading that he died at the age of 80, after 56 years as a member of the parish¹¹. Nash senior and Edwards senior, therefore, would have arrived in London in 1762. To clarify, it is likely that John Nash had spent the first ten years of his life in Neath before migrating with his family to Lambeth.

Furthermore, Nash's separation from his first wife, Jane Elisabeth Nash, in 1787, also suggests that Nash had spent his early years in South Wales. Summerson (1980) described that the separation was the result of Jane being accused by Nash, of two offences: one of extravagance and the other, an accusation of simulating false pregnancies of their two children. To control her spending habits and to avoid scandal, she was sent to stay with Nash's family in a Welsh speaking village of Aberavon, Glamorgan. There, Nash had entrusted Jane's care to a boyhood friend, Charles Charles, a Clerk at Mackworth coal yard in Neath, described by Nash's cousin, Humphrey Edwards, (a witness at the later divorce proceedings), to have been 'intimately acquainted with Nash from a child' (Suggett, 2009, p.67).

John Britton wrote in 1850¹², that Nash was born in Wales to a humble, obscure parentage, describing Nash as having to contend with difficulties in early life. However, Pugin¹³, claimed

⁷ Interview with Tyack, 2022.

⁸ Suggett, 2009.

⁹ Appendix B.

¹⁰ Esquire is a member of English gentry or proprietor that ranks below a knight.

¹¹ Suggett, 2009.

¹² John Britton was an antiquary, a topographer, author and editor (Crook, 2008). *The Autobiography of John Britton* (1850) was written in three parts; in part two, the John Nash and Humphrey Repton extract was part of a descriptive account of Britton's literary works (Britton, 1850).

that Britton was entirely wrong in his statement. Pugin described that Nash had family in Wales and that he had bought property there, with his parents having the financial means to place Nash as an apprentice to Sir Robert Taylor and Nash was born in London, thereby contradicting Britton's statement.

Little is known of Nash's mother, according to Suggett (2009), a family tree showing the Nash and Edwards family connections, confirms that her first name was Elizabeth and that she had retired to the town of Carmarthen¹⁴, which at that time, was the regional capital of Carmarthenshire, with its prosperous trading links along the river Towy¹⁵. Parish records show that a Mrs. Nash, first name unknown, was buried in the church of St Peter's on 10th January 1786¹⁶, a year following John Nash's arrival in Wales, after he answered an advertisement to complete the renovations St Peter's church roof in 1785 (Appendix C).

Nash therefore, may have chosen Carmarthen due to his family connections and by answering an advertisement to repair the church roof. It was also suggested that Nash was acquainted with the town while he oversaw the build of Carmarthen Guildhall¹⁷ in 1772-1777¹⁸ whilst working for Taylor's office in London. However, Nash had completed his apprenticeship with Taylor, by 1774-75, and had then set up his own practice in London¹⁹, nonetheless, he was on familiar terms with the local gentry²⁰ and after four years of working in Carmarthen, Nash inherited property in the town, which clarifies how he regained social status after becoming bankrupt in London (Summerson, 1980).

Suggett noted that John Nash's family originated from Broseley in Shropshire, however, the Nash name was already well established in West Wales and first appeared written in its Latinate form, as 'de Fraxino'²¹ in the 14th Century, in Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire²².

Upper Nash is an ancient hamlet and a parish between Upton and Lamphey in Pembrokeshire, located 30 miles from Carmarthen and by the 1600's a Nash family resided in Great Nash, a gentry's residence, in Llangwm²³, Pembrokeshire (now demolished). Richard Fenton, a poet, and a topographical writer had described the Nash family as

¹³ Ferrey, 1861.

¹⁴ Bach, 2023.

¹⁵ Interview with Tyack, 2022.

¹⁶ Jones, 2023.

¹⁷ Suggett, 2009.

¹⁸ Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, 2021.

¹⁹ Suggett, 2009.

²⁰ Colvin, 1978.

²¹ Meaning Ash Tree in Latin.

²² The Picton Castle Estate Records states that an Adam de Fraxino owned tenement in the east part of Haverford (Haverfordwest) town (James, 2002).

²³ Johnson, 2022.

newcomers, presumably from Carmarthenshire²⁴, as a Richard Nash was listed as an important merchant and a member of the government of Carmarthen (Jenkins, 1959).

The decade that Nash spent in Wales allowed him to reinvent himself, explore innovative ideas, make money and to establish a reputable career. It was always his intention to return to London, using Wales as a stepping-stone as suggested by Emeritus Fellow of Kellogg College, Oxford, Geoffrey Tyack²⁵, furthermore, Nash was ambitious, he wanted worldly success, the Napoleonic wars of 1803-1815, had affected overseas trading therefore, Nash believed that London was the best place to take advantage of the growing trade industry within England²⁶.

²⁴ Fenton, 1811.

²⁵ Interview with Tyack, 2022 .

²⁶ Interview with Tyack, 2022.

Frank Lloyd Wright

Wright's grandparents, Richard Lloyd Jones, a Unitarian preacher and a hatter, his wife Mallie, and their seven children, left their farm in Blaenyralltddu, in Rhydowen, Llandysul, in the Welsh county of Ceredigion and emigrated to Helena Valley, Spring Green, Wisconsin, in 1844²⁷, one of these children was Anna Lloyd Jones, mother of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Llandysul and Llanwenog at that time, had more Unitarian chapels in one area than anywhere else in Britain²⁸, and labelled by Methodists as 'y smotyn du' (the black spot), Unitarians were seen as radicals and were oppressed by society²⁹. Lloyd Jones, a free thinker, was ambitious for his children, existing day-to-day was not enough, he wanted education for them, he wanted religious freedom, away from innate prejudice of a small town (Barney, 1965) and much like Nash in 1795, Lloyd Jones wanted more than what Wales had to offer.

Frank Lloyd Wright was born in 1867, in Wisconsin, North America. His father William Carey Wright, a preacher and a musician, became estranged from his family early on. Wright's mother, Anna, was a teacher and wanted Wright to become an architect³⁰. As a child, she gifted him with blocks, games and exercises, believing in early childhood development, which was based on Friedrich Froebel's theories of learning, outlined in Froebel's book³¹ of 1827, *The Education of Man*, aimed towards a dialogue between a mother to her son (Wright, 1957)³².

As a member of the mighty Lloyd Jones family³³, Wright would have been familiar with the clan rituals of song and poetry that would have been commonplace in the Wisconsin Valley, originating from the Welsh festivals, the Eisteddfod³⁴, that they had attended every year in Cardiff (Barney, 1965). Wright spent his early life immersed in the Welsh American life, working on his Uncle James' farm. Inspired by nature, the wooded hills of Wisconsin, were much like the hills and valleys of Wales (Barney, 1965).

²⁷ Barney, 1965.

²⁸ Adams, 2022.

²⁹ Adams, 2022.

³⁰ Wright, 2005.

³¹ Translated into English by Josephine Jarvis (Froebel, 1885).

³² Froebel, the creator of the Kindergarten idea (pre-school nursery) demonstrated in his book how a child can learn by integrating play into developing intellectual and social skills (Wright, 1957).

³³ The Lloyd Jones' were though of locally as splendid people, high-minded and high-handed, and referred to by the valley community as "the God Almighty Joneses" (Barney, 1965).

³⁴ The National Eisteddfod of Wales was founded in 1176, held by Lord Rhys at Cardigan Castle, an annual event held all over Wales, where poets and musicians compete in a folk festival. Meaning 'session', the Eisteddfod was popularised in the early 19th century, with its components of the Gorsedd (throne), Bards (poets), Druid (priests) and others who contribute to Welsh culture, language and literature. It is still held annually, alternating between North and South Wales (Johnson, 2023b).

Wright only made one visit to Wales; he was invited to accept an honorary fellowship at the University of Bangor in 1956 (Secrest, 1998).

Secrest (1998) writes that there is no record that Wright traced his ancestral route back to Llandysul, although it was likely. Welsh architect Clough Williams Ellis³⁵ noted that Wright and his daughter visited the tomb of Lloyd George in Llanystumdwy, North Wales in 1956 and covered an immense amount of mileage visiting castles and the 'Welsh scene'³⁶. However, Wright's third wife, Olgivanna comments in her book³⁷ that during their visit, they came across the cemetery, and looked for his ancestor's graves, where he sensed an inborn, sentimentality for the poetic environment. He exclaimed to his wife, that,

"...a vague sense of belonging here has come over me"³⁸.

Adams (2022) confirms that Nansi Martin, from Rhydowen, witnessed and confirms Wright's visit to the Llandysul area during their visit.

Wright was passionate about America, he saw himself as a true American, despite this, he allowed himself to be nostalgic of his family's reminiscence of their Welsh homeland.

The legends of Welsh mythology, a well-worn, English translated copy of *Y Mabinogion*³⁹, by Lady Charlotte Guest, was owned by Wright at his Taliesin West library (Turner, 2021), and it was from this book that Wright read and paraphrased from,

"...Comes to mind a triad from the old Welsh Mabinogion defining genius—A man who sees nature. Has a heart for nature. The courage to follow nature" (Wright, 1957, p.81).

It was during Wright's only visit to Wales, whilst walking in the countryside with Olgivanna that he pointed to a large tree and spoke about Merlin (Myrddin), a Welsh mythical prophet, born in Carmarthen⁴⁰.

"This one is mighty enough to hold Merlin, King Arthur's magician who was turned into a tree by a Welsh sorceress" (Wright, 1966, p.16).

Sidney Lanier's work of 1905, *The Knightly Legends of Wales or the boy's Mabinogion*, which explores the Welsh tales of King Arthur, was accessible to Wright, with a copy

³⁵ Williams-Ellis, rev. edn. 2014.

³⁶ Williams-Ellis, rev. edn. 2014, p.47.

³⁷ Wright, 1966.

³⁸ Wright, 1966, p.16.

³⁹ Mabinogion is based on the 'red book of Hergest' written in the 14th century. It contains eleven stories of Celtic folklore, mythology, historical tales and legends. It is thought that these stories preceded the book, passed down through word of mouth for generations by early Welsh bards and it is unclear how these stories became written down. Stories range from the mythology of Taliesin and Merlin to the adventures of King Arthur and his knights (Johnson, 2023a).

⁴⁰ Carmarthen translates as Caer-Myrddin (that is Caerfyrddin), in the Welsh language.

available at the Hillside home school, run by Wright's aunts. Most likely this would have captured his imagination and it was from these stories came the tale of Taliesin, meaning shining brow, the greatest of Welsh poets, for whom he named his Wisconsin home and fellowship (Turner, 2021).

Wright gives acknowledgement to a book by George Borrow in his Autobiography⁴¹, having consulted his work long ago; Wright is likely to be referring to *Wild Wales: Its People, Language and Scenery*⁴². Chapter 21 of the book is dedicated to describing the scenery of Haford Ychtryd, that is discussed further in the following Chapter of this dissertation; Welsh identity.

⁴¹ Wright, 2005.

⁴² Borrow, 1862.

Chapter 2: Welsh identity

Nash's retreat to Wales in 1785, coincided with the emergence of the Picturesque movement⁴³, the topography of Wales was suited to the rugged depiction of watercolour paintings by William Gilpin⁴⁴. No longer was the Picturesque only to be seen from the confines of the house, the building itself was to contribute to the landscape, and siting the structure was paramount to the composition.

Nash was adaptable and wanted to be known as a leader of architectural fashion⁴⁵ becoming the leader in architecture of the Picturesque⁴⁶.

It is known that many of Nash's clients were keen to see the back of the litigious and expensive architect upon his return to London in 1797 (Suggett, 2009) yet he did display some understanding of cost and budget during his time in Wales. London extravagance was replaced by a played back elegance as seen in Nash's Llanerchaeron Mansion, Ceredigion built in 1790 (site visit D, 2022) and Ffynone Mansion in Pembrokeshire (site visit G, 2023). It was during Nash's decade in Wales that his talent was truly expressed, making West Wales, the forefront of innovative small country house design or box villas (Suggett, 1995).

Ffynone Mansion, one of Nash's earliest domestic designs in Wales, showed early influence of placement and orientation and experimentation of planning the service quarters⁴⁷. The house was originally commissioned for Captain John Colby in 1792 (Carter, 2023), and it was at Ffynone, that Nash experimented with a compact square plan, discreet service wings and spacial perceptions⁴⁸ (Girouard, 1980).

The modest villa of Ffynone has a pyramid roof, with bracketed pediments evident on all four facades, three of which are matching. Eliminating a principal elevation, the entrance porch is depicted by a wheel fanlight above the door, seen also at Llanerchareon (site visit D, 2022),

⁴³ It is important to note that the changing attitudes and social patterns in Great Britain in the mid-18th century. Gentry had become enthusiastic about going back to nature, with the wilder the landscape the better. Country pursuits were the epitome of sophistication, and the rise for the demand for country houses, were portrayed as idyllic getaways (Girouard, 1980).

⁴⁴ Gilpin's work, *Observations on the River Wye, and several parts of South Wales, &c. relative chiefly to picturesque beauty; made in the summer of the year 1770*, clearly highlights his interest as an advocate for the Picturesque movement. Gilpin is known as the author of the first piece of literature that described the Picturesque through paintings, during his tour of Great Britain (Royal Academy, 2023).

⁴⁵ Interview with Tyack, 2022.

⁴⁶ Nash applied the Picturesque principles he had adopted in Wales, to town planning, for London's Regent Park (interview with Tyack, 2022), and reverted back to Classicism for the design of Regent Street.

⁴⁷ Suggett, 1995, p.48.

⁴⁸ In the 18th century, architecture was an eclectic mix of styles, released from the constraints of Romanticism. Buildings needed to evoke feeling as well as be aesthetically pleasing; this created a cultural shift (interview with Tyack, 2022).

this design is repeated in the lobby at Ffynone (site visit G, 2023). Girouard (1980) suggests that the simplicity of the design intended the building to be viewed from an oblique angle.



Figure 1: Aerial view of Ffynone Mansion taken in 1953⁴⁹ (image credit: Historic England).



Figure 2: Llanerchareon Mansion⁵⁰ (image credit: Jaycie Corbett).

The plain stucco rendering, at Ffynone are devoid of decoration, with the arches on the front windows being the only ornamented relief. Pevsner describes the villa as plain and the window placement in the pediments, as graceless⁵¹. Nash preferred to use shapes rather than ornament to style the building, moving away from decoration, the played down exterior was intentional, as well as being less expensive for the client (Suggett, 1995).

It is possible that at this stage Nash was experimenting with vernacular architecture, using Picturesque principles of the building to contribute to the surroundings. The understated exterior is in sharp contrast of the interior, and is designed to evoke an element of surprise for the user. The ground floor plan at Ffynone has four principal rooms, in varied shapes, which do not relate to one another: the asymmetry of the layout, which is not reflected to the exterior, allows a relaxed and simplified design, albeit with the minimal use of Classic overtures of the Corinthian columns in the dining room (site visit G, 2023).

During the site visit it was observed that the interior of Ffynone is refined, elegant, with a centralised plan from which relates to the central hall, with a large central fireplace that came to define rural Welsh family life. The interiors are of domestic proportions, neat, similar to

⁴⁹ Showing the pyramid roof, the porch a later addition.

⁵⁰ Photo taken at an oblique angle with the landscape beyond (site visit D, 2022).

⁵¹ Lloyd, et al. 2004.

those found in a small country villa, yet there is an attention to detail. Nash preferred to use geometric shapes such as the octagonal lobby, with its umbrella vaulted ceiling, to draw the visitor in to the heart of the building, the curved stone staircase with its delicate iron railings, which although evokes an element of surprise, is placed off to the left side of the plan⁵². It is intended that the staircase does not interfere with framing the view of the exterior landscape, maintaining a close relationship between the inside and outside. From the front door, one can stand in the lobby and see directly through the building, through the window of the dining room at the other end of the house, out over the lawns and wooded, Cych valley below (Carter, 2023).

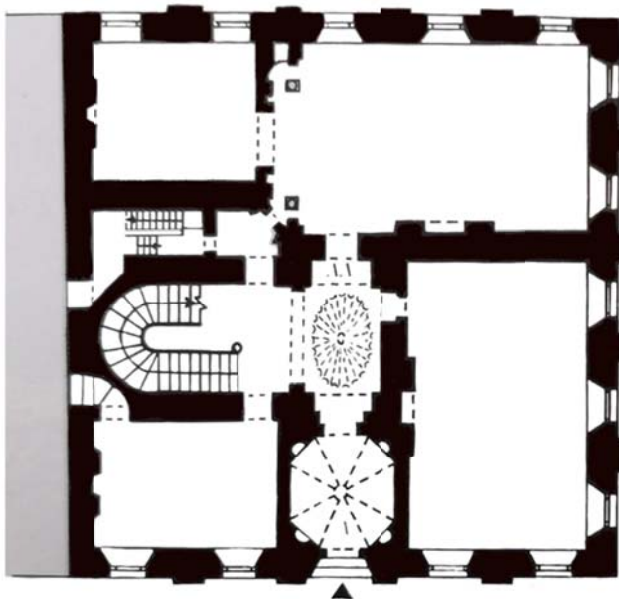


Figure 3: Ground floor plan of Ffynone Mansion (image credit: redrawn by Jaycie Corbett).



Figure 4: The view over the Cych valley⁵³ (image credit Helen Carter).

This device is also seen at Llanerchaeron Villa, where the view can be seen from the front door, through the dining room window to the gardens and the church, designed by Nash is also framed within the view (site visit D, 2022). It is evident that Nash considered topography and orientation early on in his designs.

In the following years, Nash was commissioned to design an octagonal, domed library and two small square pavilions on each corner, for Thomas Johnes⁵⁴ at Hafod Uchtryd,

⁵² The cantilevered stairs are in a similar position in Llanerchaeron villa, hidden at the end of the hallway around the corner, to the right, to create an element of surprise. It is a larger, grander stair for the space it occupies (site visit D, 2022).

⁵³ Nash employed miners to blast the ground for the house, and build directly onto the slate and also to get a better view of the valley (Carter, 2023).

Cwmystwyth, in 1794. Johnes succeeded in creating a beautiful house in an idyllic setting and extensive, wild, natural landscaping to his estate (Lloyd et al. 2006), that influenced Nash greatly.

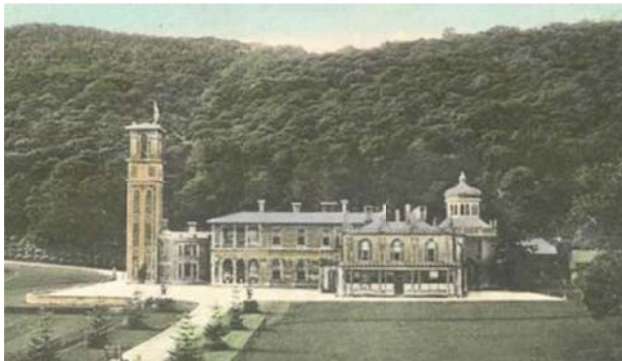


Figure 5: image of Hafod Ychtryd house ⁵⁵(image credit: Parks and Gardens).



Figure 6: Tour of Hafod, watercolour painting, 1810 (image credit: John 'Warwick' Smith).

Nash also built Castle House in Aberystwyth for Johnes's acquaintance, Uvedale Price⁵⁶, in 1794. This castellated, three-sided villa, built on the shoreline, was orientated to secure a sea view. A letter from Price to Sir George Beaumont in 1798, observes Nash's naivety to the Picturesque ethos (Watkins, 2006), as the document states Price's distaste with Nash's square design, and it was he himself that requested a sea view. Price gave Nash a brief of the building thus,

" I explained to him why I built it so close the rock, shewed him the effect of the broken foreground and its varied line, and how by that means the foreground was connected with the rocks in the second ground; all which would be lost by placing the house further back"⁵⁷.

It was noted that Nash was, "exceptionally struck with these reasons, which he said he had never thought of before in the most distant degree"⁵⁸.

Evidently, Nash was developing a new style, progressing from his work at Llanerchareron and Ffynone.

⁵⁴ Johnes,(1748-1816) was a theorist of the Picturesque. His cousin, Richard Payne Knight (1751-1824), whose influential poem *The Landscape* (Batey, 1994) in 1794, argued the ideas on the Picturesque, directed to Uvedale Price's Picturesque philosophies.

⁵⁵ Showing Nash's octagonal library and onion dome roof, discussed further in Chapter three of this dissertation.

⁵⁶ Uvedale Price (1747-1829) was one of the pioneers of the Picturesque movement, with his book, *Essay on the Picturesque* (1794) was highly influential.

⁵⁷ Watkins, 2006, p.26.

⁵⁸ Watkins, 2006, p.26.

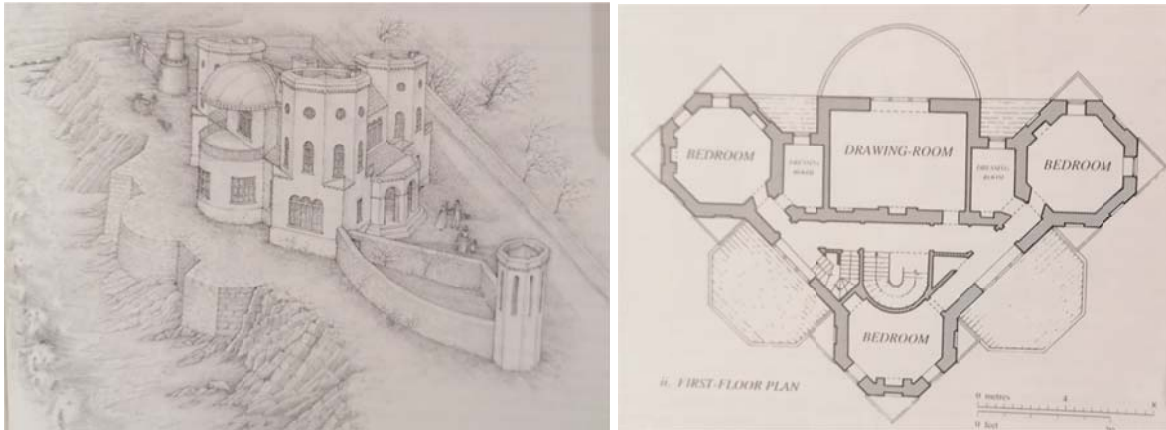


Figure 7: Castle House and first floor plan showing octagonal towers (image credit: Richard Suggett).

Nash was both client-led, and client influenced, wanting to create a style that catered to the needs and budget of his clients.

In terms of design, Nash attempted to resolve the uncomfortable presence of staff by separating the classes⁵⁹. The service wing at Ffynone was placed to the rear of the fourth elevation, hidden away, behind shrubbery, with only two access doors to the house: one, behind the stairs on the ground floor and one on the upstairs landing. The kitchen was placed in the cellars, relieving the family of noise and smells, allowing privacy by reducing the chances of conversations being overheard⁶⁰ (Suggett, 1995). This idea was resolved at Llanerchaeron Villa, as the service wing again added to the East elevation, accessed behind the stairs but arranged in an Italianate style with a central courtyard, surrounded by trees, segregated and hidden away from the approach to the house (site visit D, 2022).

Frank Lloyd Wright also created a style that catered to the needs and budget of his clients. The Usonian houses⁶¹ were simple, stripped back aesthetic, using a combination of the use of new materials with old, expressing craftsmanship whilst maintaining attention to detail. Created by Wright in the 1950's, the Usonian automatic system (Kodrich, 1989) provided non-formulaic, custom built, moderate cost housing, using a modular method of precast concrete blocks that could be assembled depending on the client's needs all the while responding to the site context. Such as the house built for Benjamin Adelman in 1951, made of site cast concrete blocks with a concrete slab roof (McCarter, 2006). Concrete, a

⁵⁹ Nash went on to re-model the west end of London. By building Regent Street, Nash created a line of separation, between fashionable Mayfair and the less fashionable east (interview with Tyack, 2022).

⁶⁰ Nash also designed Blaise Hamlet (along with Repton) in 1811, for John Scandrett Harford, it is understood that Harford requested the porches to be designed to face away from each other to discourage gossip (Urmson, 2022).

⁶¹ The word Usonia derived from the writings of Samuel Butler, sympathetic to the fact that the words 'America' and the 'United States' weren't a good enough description of the country (McCarter, 2006), and to give up on European designs for an all American architecture (McCrea, 2012).

considerably cheaper material, was initially used by Wright at Unity Temple, Oak Park, Chicago in 1906, thereby taking account of the client's budget of \$45,000, and casting the façade ornament in situ, rather than applying it afterwards, keeping costs to a minimum (Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, 2023c).



Figure 8: Benjamin Adelman house (image credit: Modern Phoenix).

Nash certainly used his return to Wales as a stepping-stone to reinvent his career and regain his reputation⁶² whereas Wright fully embraced his Welsh heritage. He saw it as a gift and the use of Welsh symbolism in his work had an identity of place in American architecture (Williams, 1984). Examples of the identity of place can be seen in his work at Unity Temple, Oak Park, Chicago in 1906-1908. Although the design of Unity Temple relates to Mayan features of monolithic, flat surfaces and square columns⁶³, Welsh overtures can be noted, such as the square geometries, which can be related back to the Unitarian chapel at Llwynrhydowen, Llandysul, rebuilt in 1879⁶⁴.

The chapel at Llwynrhydowen has a traditional long wall, with a gable ended chapel design⁶⁵, still square planned for acoustic qualities⁶⁶, designed with seating along the three sides of the building, with the pulpit facing the congregation, close enough for the preacher

⁶² Interview with Tyack, 2022.

⁶³ It is believed that Wright would have seen and admired Mayan influences at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 (Secrest, 1998), although Mayan masks may have influenced the façade of the Charnley-Persky house (1891-1892), (Scully, 2006).

⁶⁴ The new chapel replaced the original chapel due to the congregation being locked out in 1876 by a local landowner, for the congregation's anti-Tory political views. They were forced to continue the sermons on the roadside which became well known and attracted large crowds of worshippers (South Wales District Association, 2023).

⁶⁵ An earlier example is Penrhiw Unitarian Chapel, originally from Dre-fach Felindre, Carmarthenshire, built 1777, re-erected in St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff in 1956 (Site visit A, 2022).

⁶⁶ The square design also references scriptures,

'The City of the Lord, shall lie foursquare, and the breadth shall not be greater than the length' (21 Rev. 16). (Jones, 1996, p.35).

to see each listener (Secrest, 1998). The twin entrance doors of Llwynrhydowen chapel are located either side of the pulpit, which includes a 'sêr fawr' (large seat): a row of seating in front of the pulpit for the deacons to stand and face the congregation to sing, with the minister stood above them (Welsh Religious Building Trust, 2015). Llwynrhydowen chapel was designed to contain galleries to accommodate the growth of the congregation during the religious revivals of the time (Jones, 1996).

Similarly, Unity Temple is square in plan, with twin entrances through narrow doors either side of the pulpit to the main room. The congregation would emerge from under the galleries, comparable to Llwynrhydowen, and enter facing the congregation, giving an opportunity to move forward towards their pastor on passing the pulpit after the service (Wright, 2005). Although Unity Temple has no deacons to occupy 'y sêr fawr', the seat is placed behind the preacher's lectern, reversing the traditional order of the chapel, making it unique in design.



Figure 9: Llwynrhydowen chapel⁶⁷ (image credit: Welsh Religious Buildings Trust).



Figure 10: The pulpit at Unity Temple⁶⁸ (image credit: Heidi Ruehle).

Jones (1996), author of *Welsh Chapels*, made this comparison with Unity Temple,

"This kind of interior is uniquely Welsh nonconformist, with the synagogue as the only other parallel. I find it a lively and very plausible connection", (Secrest, 1998, p.180).

However there is no evidence to suggest that Wright used Welsh chapel design at Unity Temple (Secrest, 1998), but coincidentally, the design stage coincided with Wright's mother's return from a trip to Wales with Wright's sister, Maginel in 1903 (Hamilton, 2023). It is possible they would have returned with information regarding the 'new' Unitarian chapel in

⁶⁷ Pulpit in view between the windows, with 'y sêr fawr' in front, the covered entrance with gallery above.

⁶⁸ 'Y sêr fawr' is located behind the lectern with the side entrance under the gallery.

Llwynrhydowen, Llandysul as Maginel, a book illustrator, sketched, painted and documented the rural life in Llandysul during their stay (Barney, 1965).

This design for Unity Temple was revolutionary, changing the way chapels were designed, not conforming to the traditional colonial style with white spires reaching up to God (Wright, 2005). One could interpret the design as being revolutionary as the reasons why the Lloyd Joneses left Wales, for religious freedom to express their beliefs.

It was whilst building his home in Oak Park, Chicago in 1889 that Wright symbolised unity, a gathering place which he saw as an integral part of family life. The single wide chimney, the fireplace and the hearth is central to the simplicity of the open plan living space, with Wright himself commenting,

“It comforted me to see the fire burning deep in the solid masonry of the house itself. A feeling that came to stay” (Wright, 2005, p.141).

Wright’s first Prairie house and his first commission after leaving Sullivan’s office, was the William Winslow house built in 1893. The significance of the hearth is emphasised (comparable to Oak Park), by the elevated, centralised fireplace and inglenook situated opposite the front door⁶⁹, raised up resembling a chapel pulpit or stage, and enclosed bay window seats like chapel box pews. The Welsh overtures of the Celtic knotwork on the flanking the front door, although thought of as Sullivanesque⁷⁰ it was most likely inspired designs from the *Grammar of Ornament* by Owen Jones⁷¹ (1856) that Wright references in *An Autobiography*.⁷²



Figure 11: The raised hearth at the Winslow house (image credit: Pamela Linn Real Estates).



Figure 12: seating at the Winslow house (image credit: Pamela Linn Real Estates).

⁶⁹ Frank Lloyd Wright Trust, 2023b.

⁷⁰ Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, 2023b.

⁷¹ Chapter 15 describes the Celtic ornament of the Britain.

⁷² Wright describes the drawings he had made for a job application at Adler and Sullivan’s office (2005).

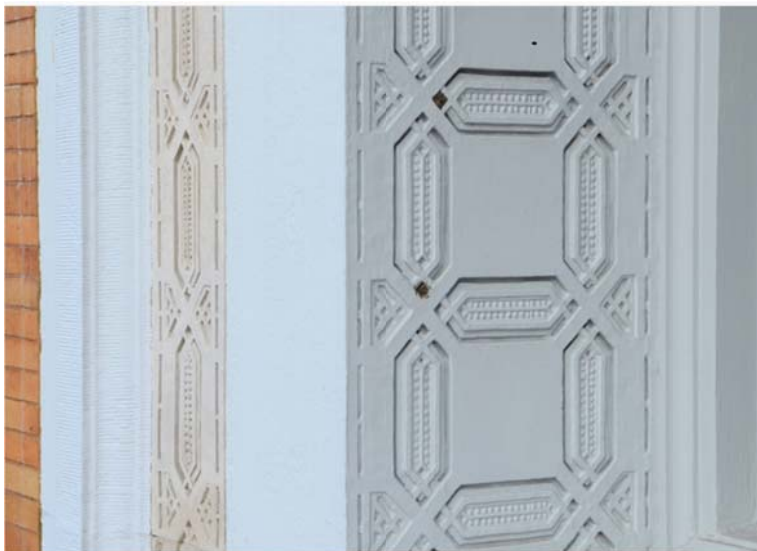


Figure 13: Celtic knotwork flanking the front door at the William Winslow house (image credit: Mark Hertzberg).

It is understood that the Arts and Craft movement inspired Wright's use of the fireplace in his early Prairie style designs, from the low level, deep-set hearth of the Robie house (1909), to the stone fireplace at Fallingwater (1935). At Fallingwater, the main focal point of the house is the dramatic high verticality of the chimney through to the hearth which is the natural boulder stone underneath the building, anchoring the horizontal, cantilevered floors.

Although Wright embraced new technologies, the open fireplaces, which were not always practical, and thought of as out-dated by the 1930's⁷³ still appeared in most of Wright's early designs. Set deep in the centre of the plan such as Wingspread (1937), the last of the Prairie houses, in the open plan room, the single brick chimney has five fireplaces heating different parts of the room.

Cripps (2022) states that the stone chimney and slate hearth in the living room at Bleanyrallt ddu in Llandysul (site visit C, 2022), has been referred to as 'Mallie's hearth' (Wright's grandmother). There is no provenance that the fireplace sentimentality is ancestral although it is coincidental that it is similar to the large stone fireplace and hearth at Taliesin studio. Many of Wright's fireplaces also have iron cranes⁷⁴, with a hanging kettle or pot. The use of the crane is debatable as many of the fireplaces are not intended for cooking, such as the vertical fireplace at Wingspread⁷⁵. Sikora comments that there an intention of cooking on the hearth yet none of Wright's fireplaces are located in the kitchen (2023).

⁷³ Open fires were unfashionable by the turn of the 20th century, in favour of mantels and wooden fire surrounds (Wright, 2005) by the 1930's, coal fires were replaced by oil furnaces (Jackson, 2018).

⁷⁴ Iron armature that swivels over the flame from which hang the cooking pots.

⁷⁵ Wingspread had the fifth fireplace on the mezzanine where 12 foot logs are stacked upright, intended to also, to burn upright, when the logs burn, they fall to the side, making the principle of the vertical fireplace, useless Wright may have intended these fireplaces to be merely decorative.



Figure 14: Left: Mallie's hearth at Blaenyralltddu (image credit: Stephen Cripps) and a stone fireplace at Taliesin studio (image credit: John Devereaux).

It is probable that the fireplace, crane and pot all reference Wright's childhood in the Valley. The sentimentality, security and sense of belonging, he may have experienced as part of the Lloyd Jones family with *cawl bach*⁷⁶ bubbling on the fire, as described by Maginel, when their aunts and uncles returned home to Mallie,

"When they came home at the end of those cold days....and the fire snapping. There would be a good smell of *cawl bach*, and they were hungry, and their mother was there, and home was home as it would never be again." (Barney, 1965, p.53).

The spherical pot, reminiscence of a cauldron, can be seen at Fallingwater, Taliesin, Wingspread and at Taliesin West, may reference the book of Taliesin as part of *Y Mabinogion* (Guest, 1924) where a cauldron of inspiration (Awen, the source of spiritual strength, prophetic and poetic inspiration) contributed to the creation of Taliesin, the bard⁷⁷ (The British Druid Order, 2019). Awen, is represented in Druidic terms as three rays of light, and its symbol /// was designed by Iolo Morgannwg, an acquaintance of Wright's great uncle, Charles Lloyd⁷⁸ who was familiar with the Unitarian church (Adams, 2022). The

⁷⁶ Cawl, is a traditional Welsh broth, cooked slowly, in a large pot over a flame, made of beef or lamb, stock water and vegetables, with the key ingredient being the leek.

⁷⁷ The mythical story of Taliesin begins with Ceridwen the sorceress, boiling a cauldron of potion that would grace her son, Morfan with inspiration and science (Awen). Gwion bach was given the role of stirring of the pot for a year and a half, and Morda, the blind servant, tended to the fire. Accidentally, one day, the potion spilled three drops onto Gwion bach's hand, which he subsequently put in his mouth. Gwion bach fled in panic, Ceridwen chased him and shapeshifted. Eventually, while Ceridwen was a bird and Gwion bach a grain of wheat, she ate him. Impregnated by the grain of wheat, she gave birth to a baby, which was Taliesin, the bard (Guest, 1924).

⁷⁸ Iolo Morgannwg (1746-1826), a Welsh bard and druid was also acquainted with Nash's family (Suggett, 2009).

symbol was also used in many of Wright's early buildings especially at the Hillside school run by Wright's two aunts.



Figure 15: Fallingwater, Mill Run, Pennsylvania (image credit: Fallingwater.org).



Figure 16: Fireplace at Fallingwater⁷⁹ (image credit: Lee Stanstead).

⁷⁹ Cauldron and crane at Fallingwater, showing the natural bedrock hearth.



Figure 17: The vertical fireplaces at Wingspread (image credit: e-images and sound).

Interestingly, Morgannwg's motto 'y gwir yn erbyn y byd' (The truth against the world), associated with the Eisteddfod culture of Wales, was also used broadly by Wright and his family.



Figure 18: Eisteddfod chair showing the symbol /l/ and the motto 'y gwir yn erbyn y byd' (image credit: National Museum Wales).

Druidic references are also present at Nash's Temple Druid, Maenclochog, Pembrokeshire built in 1795 (Site visit F, 2022). Named after the nearby Cromlech⁸⁰, the house stands in a wooded valley and it is evident that landscaping played an important role in its placement and orientation⁸¹. The present house, built in 1830, stands on the grounds of the original with only minimal detail survives; such as the cellars, curved recesses and doors, seen also in Llaerchaeron and Ffynone. The grade II* rubble stone outhouses are also designed by Nash, but of a rustic nature, with varying arches seen in the porches at Blaise Hamlet, Bristol.



Figure 19: Temple Druid, Maenclochog⁸² (image credit: Jaycie Corbett).

Temple Druid was commissioned by Barrington Price, the brother of Uvedale Price⁸³, and built the same year as Nash designed Priory House, Cardigan for Elisabeth Johnes (Johnson, 2023), mother of Thomas Johnes of Hafod Ychtryd.

Client connections are discussed further in the following Chapter of this dissertation.

⁸⁰ In 3500 BC Welsh settlers constructed dwellings of large stones without the use of mortar, known as Cromlech.

⁸¹ Two beech trees and a man-made lake, frame the view from the house, the trees have a preservation order on them, planted the same time as the house was built. From the existing rear garden (or originally the front), a view up the valley captures a composition of two conifer trees, of different shades of green, with the lake in the foreground, standing out amongst smaller trees, much like a painting. An original footpath passes through the garden and woodland. It is believed that the original access road was from the north, down over the hill, meandering through the landscape with the front elevation facing the views to the east. The south access, now the main porch entrance, was for the services and the back of the house. (Site visit F, 2022 with a guided tour from Shona Prasad).

⁸² Showing south access, the original service access and the view of the garden from the house (site visit F, 2022).

⁸³ Lloyd, et al., 2004.

Chapter 3: Philosophies, Innovation and Professional relationships

Philosophies

A comparison of Nash's Picturesque movement can be made with Wright's Organic philosophies, with both theories prioritising the importance of nature and its effects on the wellbeing of people and designing a house which has a relationship with the landscape.

The Picturesque movement was a reaction against the formal, methodical landscaping layouts of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown⁸⁴ that did not consider the character of place. The Picturesque movement was concerned with composition, the broken foreground, in an idyllic scene of irregularity of the wild countryside, connecting nature, art and literature. Gilpin, Price and Repton could not agree on what version of the Picturesque style mostly defined the theories (Fay, 2023).

Wright's inspiration came from many sources including Japanese architecture. During the Chicago Exposition in 1893, Wright saw authentic Japanese prints at the Japanese national Ho-o-den pavilion, the cruciform plan around a central room that influenced his future designs on open plan living (Frank Lloyd Wright Trust, 2023a). Nevertheless, Wright, was known as the 'father' of Organic architecture and he first used the term in an article for the *Architectural Record*, in August 1914 (Wright, 1914). He came to realise that Organic architecture was first phrased 500 years B.C.E, by Lao Tze, an ancient Chinese philosopher and writer, that the reality of the building does not consist of walls and roof but in the space within, to be lived in (Wright, 2017).

Organic philosophies are defined as an entity, with consideration to the landscape and to vernacular conditions (Graff, 2018). Natural materials; such as wood and stone are expressed in their honest state and colour should derive from surrounding trees and landscape to blend in with natural forms. The building should look as if it has emerged from the earth, a sanctuary to protect and shelter against the elements (Gutheim, 1975).

Organic architecture is proportional to the human scale, and it focuses on interior and exterior use of space and the use of abstract plant geometries. Wright simplified designs of structures, reducing the number of rooms in a building by opening them up as free flowing spaces, re-inventing spaces for the way of life as Wright had concerns about the way people lived (Graff, 2018).

⁸⁴ Lancelot Brown (1716-1783), better known as 'Capability' Brown was the most famous landscape architect who was responsible for more than 170 gardens surrounding the finest country houses the UK. The nickname of 'Capability' originated when Brown referred to gardens as having great "capability" when discussing the potential of the landscape with his clients. Also known as "England's greatest gardener", Brown's style was celebrated for its simplicity and elegance.

Wright's Organic principles were concerned with the quality of life, so people could live more generously and fully, and were philosophies that he had developed from his time as an apprentice to Louis Sullivan. Sullivan believed that buildings should respond to its own environment, just as plants would grow naturally out of all its conditions⁸⁵.

Welsh for 'shining brow', Taliesin iii⁸⁶, Spring Green, Wisconsin, home to Wright and the fellowship (1925), is an exemplar of Organic architecture. Built on the brow of the hill as opposed to the top, the terraces command views of the valley below, reminiscent of the year Wright spent in Fiesole Tuscany in 1909, with Mamah Borthwick Cheney⁸⁷.



Figure 20: View of Taliesin on the brow of the hill (image credit: Andrew Pielage).

During the site visit to Fiesole, Florence it was observed that Wright's villa, Villino Belvedere is situated on a picturesque street on a steep hillside, with terraced walled gardens and panoramic views overlooking the valley below, with the city of Florence to the south. The stone and terracotta buildings are nestled into the hillside, with low lying roofs half hidden by cypress trees as if they have always been present (site visit B, 2022).

⁸⁵ Sullivan's twisted, arched organic motifs on terracotta facades and ironwork pioneered Art Nouveau at the turn of the 20th century (Chicago Architecture Centre, 2023).

⁸⁶ Originally built in 1911, Talesin was destroyed by fire in 1914 and 1925 and rebuilt soon after (Wright, 1957).

⁸⁷ A client's wife, for whom Wright left his family and work for and retreated to Europe (Secrest, 1998).



Figure 21: Garden at Taliesin (image credit: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation).



Figure 22: Villino Belvedere (image credit: Jaycie Corbett).



Figure 23: Views over the Tuscan valley⁸⁸ (image credit: Jaycie Corbett).

Whilst in Fiesole, Wright was captivated by the Renaissance style of the Villa Medici (1451-1457)⁸⁹. Built with consideration to the landscape, it is a simple structure of proportion and a harmony of geometries⁹⁰. The foliage covered loggias and terraces commands the view of the Tuscan valley, the steep sloped gardens are enclosed within high stone walls (Marchimazzini, 2023).

⁸⁸ The house in the foreground is in the Renaissance style, discussed in Chapter four of this dissertation.

⁸⁹ Secrest, 1998.

⁹⁰ Nash's Italian influence and Italianate building, Cronkhill House is discussed in Chapter four of this dissertation.

Although, in the early years of his career, Wright rejected the Renaissance and jibed his contemporaries, in the *Art and Craft of the Machine*, Wright writes,

“It is this decadence which we call the Renaissance; it is the setting sun which we mistake for dawn” (Wright, 1901, p.79).

Nevertheless, Wright spent part of that year in Italy designing his idea of a Tuscan villa in the form of Prairie style⁹¹, and consequently, Wright built Taliesin using the same principles based on his experience in Fiesole with emphasis on the horizontal planes, the low, gentle sloping, hipped roofs, the wide overhanging eaves and the strong verticality of a large chimney connects with a maze of courtyards, terraces and walled gardens. The building was intended to imitate an outcrop of yellow sand-limestone on the hillside; therefore, Taliesin was made of locally sourced stone and cedar timber elements, creating a green architecture, a sustainable ethos way before his time (McCrea, 2012).

Inside Taliesin, one enters the living space at the corner, to experience the widest expanse of the room. On the opposite corner of the room is a mitred window, designed by Wright, where two frameless panes of glass meet creating an interaction from the outside, in. The ground floor rooms open out directly onto terraces and gardens, whilst the other side of the building overlooks the valley through a series of square windows that frame the view like Japanese prints. The large rooms transition to smaller compressed areas, with changing ceiling heights that emphasised the sense of space⁹². The floors were laid with wide, dark-streaked cypress boards, an echo of Fiesole (Wright, 2005).



Figure 24: The lounge at Taliesin, Wisconsin⁹³ (image credit: Open Culture).

⁹¹ The Prairie style responded to the landscape of mid-western America. Features include: gentle sloping, overhanging roofs, emphasis on the horizontal, simple proportional structures with suppressed chimneys, low terraces and private gardens (Gutheim, 1975). The Prairie style designers are discussed in Chapter four of this dissertation.

⁹² Murphy, 2009.

⁹³ With square windows and mitred corner window (far right) with views out over the valley.

Innovation

Nash and Wright had technical awareness; they were both advocates of new methods, technology and the use of new materials.

Nash considered himself both an architect and an engineer, an unsurprising view as his family were engineers, although this title was abandoned once he became an architect of the country houses (Mansbridge, 2004).

The traditional masonry bridges in Cardiganshire, over the river Rheidiol, Aberystwyth (1792) and Trecefel, Tregaron (1793) were standard in design, nonetheless, the structures were successful (Mansbridge, 2004). Opportunity came for Nash to be innovative with iron bridge design, in particular, the slender cast iron structure at Stanford-on-Teme in the Malvern Hills, which spanned 100 feet, but collapsed prior to completion. Two years later, Nash designed a replacement bridge, using a patented design of cast iron boxes bolted together to create a shallow arch, which remained in situ for over 100 years (Mansbridge, 2004).



Figure 25: Original and replacement iron bridges at Stanford-on-Teme (image credit: Michael Mansbridge).

The use of structural iron was successful in the elaborate design for the Indo-Saracenic architecture⁹⁴, of the domes and minarets at Brighton Pavillion, improvements that were made on the existing pavilion by Henry Holland⁹⁵ for the Prince Regent in 1815. The Mughal inspired domes were an experimentation (along with the design for a cast iron stair) of superimposed iron columns across the existing roofs⁹⁶. The flat roofs were sealed with a newly invented mastic⁹⁷ and Nash was one of the first to use Adam's patented

⁹⁴ A mixture of Indian and Islamic architecture used by British architects in the 18th century.

⁹⁵ Architect Henry Holland (1745-1806) learnt architectural design from Capability Brown, with whom he established a partnership in 1771. Holland is best remembered for the original work at the (Marine) Pavilion at Brighton in 1786-1787, designed for George, Prince of Wales (the future George IV).

⁹⁶ Brighton and Hove Museum, 2023.

⁹⁷ Nash experimented with lime containing zinc oxides, lead, fire clay, and turpentine to create a waterproof base, this proved unsuccessful, and the 'mastic' needed replacing soon after (The Regency Town House, 2023).

stucco⁹⁸(Mansbridge, 2004). The design for Brighton Pavillion was inspired by Samuel Pepys Cockerell's⁹⁹ Sezincote House (1805-1807), which had been visited by the Prince Regent in 1807 (Peake, 2023), nonetheless, Nash had already built the onion dome roof at Hafod Ychtryd in 1794, and Cockerell had visited Johnes in Hafod on his tour of Wales in 1806, and commented that he admired Nash's octagonal library with the onion dome roof design (Summerson, 1980).



Figure 26: Brighton Pavillion (image credit: Regency History).

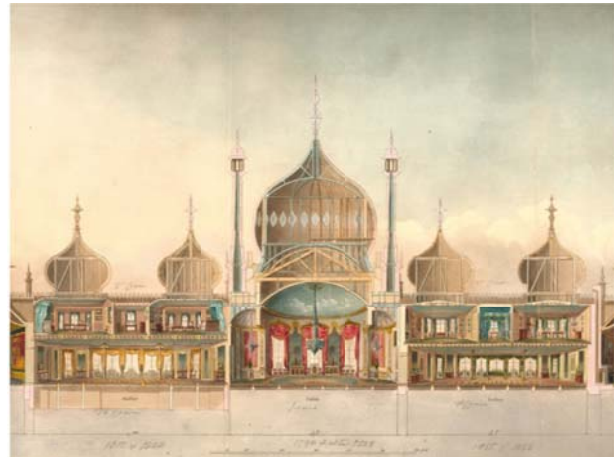


Figure 27: Section plan of Brighton Pavillion showing the iron work (image credit: Brighton Museums).



Figure 28: Onion dome roof at Hafod Ychtryd (image credit: Parks and Gardens).



Figure 29: Onion dome at Sezincote (image credit: Sezincote Estate).

⁹⁸ During this time, experiments were carried out by architects to create the smoothest, toughest and more durable plaster. The Adams brothers patented 'Adams' artificial stone' made with an oily mix to stucco the façade of Marlborough House, London in 1776 (The Regency Town House, 2023).

⁹⁹ Cockerell (1753-1827), also a pupil of Taylor's office, was a few years younger than Nash and from a successful family. Nash was envious of Cockerell's architectural success and their careers often collided (Summerson, 1980).

Although Wright's definition of an engineer was that they are a 'rudimentary undeveloped architect' (Wright, 2011), Wright, having almost completed an engineer qualification in his early career, had also experimented with gravity defying structures. The cantilevered floors at Fallingwater (1936) are considered to be revolutionary in design, but the miscalculation of steel has caused deflection, dropping and cracking to occur¹⁰⁰ (Silman, 2011).

The tree like columns at the Johnson Wax Headquarters in Wisconsin (1936-1939) for company president Herbert Johnson, were tested to prove they would stand up without support. Life magazine described the building as being the greatest innovation since the skyscraper (Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, 2023a).

Steel mesh, reinforced concrete was used to create the self-supporting, slender white columns that spread to 18inch wide circular 'lily pads' supporting the roof of the great workroom. The use of innovative glass tubing allowed clerestory diffused light into the windowless room, however, the lack of available technology at that time, resulted in the glass tubes leaking, and Johnson, having to catch the water in a bucket (Robinson, 2020).

Nevertheless, Johnson, still commissioned Wright to build his home at Wingspread¹⁰¹ in Wisconsin (1938-39), which also leaked, and the SC Johnson Research Tower (1950) for the company's research and design division.



Figure 30: Columns in the great workroom, Johnson wax building (image credit: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation).

¹⁰⁰ Tension rods were placed within the floors in 2002 to correct the long term, continuous deflection of the 15-foot cantilever that had dropped seven inches. In the haste to build the house, an oversight occurred by Wright's engineers one of whom was Wes Peters, Wright's son in law (Silman, 2011).

¹⁰¹ Now known as the Herbert F. Johnson House, Wingspread was considered by Wright to be one of his most elaborate and expensive house design, and the last of the Prairie houses. The building was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1989 and is now a conference centre.



Figure 31: Testing the lily-pad columns (image credit: Pinterest).

Professional relationships

Both Nash and Wright were known for their charm and their persuasive demeanour. Neither was defeated by bankruptcy or discredited reputations and while Nash moved to Wales to reinvent himself¹⁰², Wright moved to Italy. In the workplace, both architects had a professional relationship working with a multi-disciplinary team of architects, engineers and landscape architects.

Nash's working relationship with Humphry Repton¹⁰³ (and his son George¹⁰⁴) was initially successful, they were introduced to each other by Edward Foley¹⁰⁵ at Stoke Edith in 1792, who thought Nash and Repton to be "the cleverest men in England" and "if they could agree to act together, they might carry the whole world before them" (Temple, 1988, p.115). Nash's buildings and Repton's landscape design complimented each other and were enhanced by George Repton's drawings. However a financial disagreement led to an abrupt end of the relationship, yet George continued to work at Nash's office. In contrast, Nash's longstanding professional relationship with James Morgan¹⁰⁶, an engineer for the Regent's Canal in

¹⁰² Tyack mentioned during the interview, that "Nash was enterprising and able to cope with reversal in his career, mainly as he needed to make money", (interview with Tyack, 2022).

¹⁰³ Thought by many to be the last great English landscape designer of the 18th century, Humphry Repton (1752-1818) was considered as the successor of Capability Brown.

¹⁰⁴ George Stanley Repton (1786-1858), the fourth son of Humphry Repton, was trained in architecture by Augustus Charles Pugin and worked as a chief assistant to John Nash.

¹⁰⁵ Edward Foley (1747- 1803) was brother to Thomas Foley, 2nd Baron Foley (1742-1793), a friend of Nash.

¹⁰⁶ Thought to have been born in Carmarthen, Morgan (1776-1856) was employed by Nash, both in Wales and for the masterplan of Regent's Park, London (1811).

London, began during the build of Carmarthen gaol and lasted over 40 years. John Summerson, a biographer of Nash, described Morgan as,

“Never for an instant does Morgan emerge as a personality, but he is always there. He is the backroom partner, the alter ego, the deputy, the agent, the man of straw, whichever character the master needs at the moment, his usefulness is inexhaustible...” (Summerson, 1980, p.25).

Client connections were crucial to Nash’s career, and he received repeat commissions from a close circle of clients that were connected either by family or socially, despite working hard and travelling as far as Ireland (interview with Tyack, 2022).

Nash’s drawings of the Picturesque style outbuildings for Nanteos were commissioned in 1805 and drawn up in 1813 (by George Repton) for Major William Powell. Nash already had dealings with Powell’s aunt, Corbetta Powell, for the design for Llanercharon mansion in Aberaeron (National Trust, 2023a), she and her husband, Colonel William Lewis, were friends with Thomas Johnes of Hafod Ychtryd¹⁰⁷. Elizabeth Johnes of Hafod Ychtryd employed Nash to build Priory House in Cardigan in 1788 which was gifted to her from her son, Thomas in 1774 (Johnson, 2023).

As a parallel to Nash’s professional relationships, Marion Mahoney Griffin¹⁰⁸, a registered architect, worked at Wright’s office at Oak Park for 15 years, producing drawings of Wright’s buildings. Helping to enhance his career, she created lithographs for Wright’s Wasmuth portfolio and her Japanese influenced watercolour illustrations, such as the drawing for the DeRhodes house, in a style not used before to market Wright’s architecture to clients, giving Wright worldwide recognition¹⁰⁹ (Zulkey, 2017).

¹⁰⁷ Lloyd et al, 2006.

¹⁰⁸ Mahony (1871-1961) was one of the first licensed female architects in the world, and an original member of the Prairie School.

¹⁰⁹ Their relationship faltered when Wright left his family, and abandoned his office to go to Europe with Mamah Cheney.



Figure 32: The DeRhodes house, integration of architecture and nature in the same composition (image credit: Jennifer Gray).

Wright's important relationship with Jen Jensen (1860-1951) a Danish- American landscape architect, and an advocate for the Prairie style, spanned 31 years. They had a difference of opinion but all the while a mutual regard for one another¹¹⁰. Jensen believed that a building had a separate identity to the garden, contradicting Wright who had attempted to merge buildings with the landscape by extending the lines with terraces, pools or planting boxes. Nonetheless, Jensen worked on many commissions alongside Wright, including the Avery Clooney House, Riverside, Illinois (Grese, 1992).

After the Columbian Exposition¹¹¹ a group of Chicago designers, including Wright and Jensen, experimented with ways of relating buildings to the flat land of the mid-west. Landscape architects such as Frederick Olmstead and Calvert Vaux¹¹² along with Andrew Jackson Downing, explored a vision for an American Picturesque design, of marrying architecture to the landscape, proving that beautiful buildings could be achieved in a natural Picturesque setting without being forcefully done, this became known as the Prairie style (Grese, 1992).

¹¹⁰ Russell, 2001.

¹¹¹ World's Columbian Exposition was also known as the Chicago World Fair in 1893, held to honour Christopher Columbus's voyage to the continent, 400 years earlier. Developed by Frederick Olmsted, a leading landscape architect collaborated with architects such as Louis Sullivan and Daniel Burnham. The Fair showcased American power and values through art, architecture, engineering and innovation. The Fair established a Neo-Classical revival across America as opposed to the intended home-grown American styles (PBS, 2023).

¹¹² Calvert Vaux came to America from England in 1850, to collaborate with Andrew Jackson Downing on Picturesque landscape projects, bringing with him British architecture ideas. Vaux also designed South Park, Chicago and Central Park, New York (Cultural Landscape Foundation, 2023).

Chapter 4: Work in America

After rebuilding his reputation in Wales, Nash returned to England in 1797, with a well-established repertoire of designing country villas.

By this time, British social patterns dictated that the upper classes were primarily interested in the pursuits of Italian artefacts¹¹³ in the form of statues and art that depicted the ideal landscapes, and the re-creation of these scenes in their own gardens. Travelling had become easier, therefore, as part of their education, young men of social class and wealth, were expected to visit the continent to collect pieces of artwork for cultural enrichment (Girouard, 1980).

Although Nash hinted upon an Italian courtyard at the rear of Llanerchareron¹¹⁴, these social influences is likely how Nash's Italianate styles were conceived, although his transition to this style is unclear¹¹⁵.

Nash applied the picturesque principles of placement, orientation and composition to his work when he designed Cronkill house, Shropshire (1802), Attingham Park, Shropshire (1804), the first of three Claudian villas¹¹⁶, along with Sandridge Park, Devon (1804) and Lissan Rectory, County Tyrone (1807).



Figure 33: Landscape near Rome with a view of Ponte Molle by Claude Lorrain (image credit: Birmingham Museums Trust).

¹¹³ Namely the Society of Dilettanti (Hornsby, 2010).

¹¹⁴ Site visit D, 2022.

¹¹⁵ Yallop, 2013.

¹¹⁶ Claudian villa, named after the similarities to the landscape painting by Claude Lorrain (1600-1682) of Rome and the Ponte Molle (1645), depicting a whitewashed villa with a round tower, sited within an ideal setting in the landscape (Birmingham Art Trust, 2019).



Figure 34: Cronkill House, Shropshire before restoration (image credit: National Trust).



Figure 35: Restoration project returned Cronkill to its original colour (image credit: National Trust).

Cronkill is considered the most well-known of the three Italianate villas, for its originality and compact design¹¹⁷ (Yallop, 2013), as an extension to an existing red brick, 17th century farmhouse. The smooth white stucco render of Cronkill contrasts with the existing buildings; however, originally, it was intended by Nash to be painted an ochre colour to blend in with the surroundings in accordance to the Picturesque principles. Uvedale Price describes the effect that a white building has on the viewer,

‘...does stare you most impudently in the face...a cottage of a quiet colour is soothing and tranquil ... whitened, the modest retired character is gone, and is succeeded by a perpetual glare’, (Price, 1842, p.132).

¹¹⁷ Commissioned for Francis Walford an agent for the 2nd Lord Berwick, at Attingham Estate, whom, along with Lady Berwick, had visited Italy and returned with artefacts (National Trust, 2023b).

Sited on a gentle slope and orientated to capture views over the Wrekin, Shropshire, the front elevation, is east facing. Consideration was not given to the solar aspect of the orientation¹¹⁸ as the windows of the loggia do not benefit from the sun throughout the day and the south facing windows overlook the service wing at the rear. Rectangular in plan, with two, three storey towers, one circular to the northeast and the other square (the library) to the southwest, the Romanesque arched windows and loggia, the slate hipped roofs with deep eaves are characteristics of an informal Italianate villa. The brick chimney stacks were not included in the original sketch that was presented to the client (Davis, 1960).



Figure 36: Original painting of Cronkhill House as it was presented to the clients, using the ochre colour render as opposed to white (image credit: Sir John Soane's Museum).

A natural colour was also used on the interior walls of Llanerchaeron, and Wright used the natural colour namely 'Covered wagon' on the walls at Fallingwater, reminiscent of Rhododendron leaves in autumn (Schlotter, 2021).

¹¹⁸ Interview with Tyack, 2022.



Figure 37: Hallway walls at Llanerchaeron villa, Aberaeron¹¹⁹ (image credit: Jaycie Corbett).



Figure 38: Round tower at Cronkhill¹²⁰ (image credit: National Trust).

Moreover, the external geometries of Cronkhill, do not reflect the interior layout, for example, the round tower is an elongated lozenge shaped room ¹²¹(Yallop, 2013), an architectural trick that unexpectedly, does not contain a round room or a round staircase¹²².

¹¹⁹ During restoration work at Llanerchaeron Mansion, the original paint colour was discovered under layers of wallpaper. Farrow and Ball matched it with their paint 'Germaline pink' (site visit D, 2022).

¹²⁰ Also during restoration work at Cronkhill House, the National Trust uncovered an elliptical, painted window on the original façade of the circular tower.

¹²¹ This method of differentiating exterior with the interior was not new to Nash, at Llanerchaeron, some windows on the front elevation and interior doors are false, in order to create symmetry and proportion (site visit D, 2022).

Recognised as the first Italian villa in Britain and the source of inspiration to 19th century house building (National Trust, 2023b), Nash's Cronkhill was imitated internationally in Australia and North America¹²³. Moreover, Maynard (2002) indicated there was a delay in the British Picturesque principles reaching North America. It took 35 years for a house resembling the Italianate style of Cronkhill to appear as the Bishop George Doane house in Burlington, New Jersey (1837).



Figure 39: The first Italianate style house for Bishop George Doane (image credit: Historic American Buildings Survey).

Conflictingly, Scully (2003) noted that the British Picturesque design was introduced to North America in 1847-1850, through Andrew Jackson Downing's books, that reflected on the work of Repton¹²⁴, with the most poignant book being *A Treatise on the theory and practice of landscape gardening adapted to North America with remarks on rural Architecture*¹²⁵. In the pattern books Downing (and Repton) describes the Italianate style of Cronkhill and cottage ornées¹²⁶ of Nash's Blaise Hamlet, Bristol (1811). These books would have been widely available, and the philosophies adapted to create an American domestic architecture of the shingle style (Scully, 2003).

Wright was famously influenced by the shingle style (Scully, 1971), which he was introduced to in the offices of Silsbee and additionally when he worked for Adler and Sullivan. Wright

¹²² Davis, 1960.

¹²³ Yallop, 2013.

¹²⁴ Humphrey Repton's book, *Observations on the theory and practice of landscape gardening* (1805) was adapted by Downing to suit North America.

¹²⁵ Other books by Downing are *Cottage residences* (1842) and *Architecture of country houses* (1850), both of which describe house types popular in England in the 1800s (Scully, 2003).

¹²⁶ Cottages ornées is French for ornate cottage, for this context it refers to a small picturesquely designed country house of the 19th century (Historic England, 2023).

built his home and studio at Oak Park (1889), in the shingle style amongst the Tanglewood trees (Wright, 2005), and commented:

‘... a certain profusion of foliage characterised the village. I remember well that I came to Oak Park to live for no other reason than that’ (Pfeiffer, 1992, p.56).

As Sullivan was the most significant and direct influence on Wright’s early career, it is imperative to identify the similarities between the lozenge shaped room of Sullivan and Wright’s¹²⁷ Charnley-Ruddiman house (1890), Ocean Springs and that of Cronkhill. Also, the octagonal buildings of Nash’s unbuilt gatehouses at Nanteos¹²⁸ resemble Sullivan Minor guest house (1890).

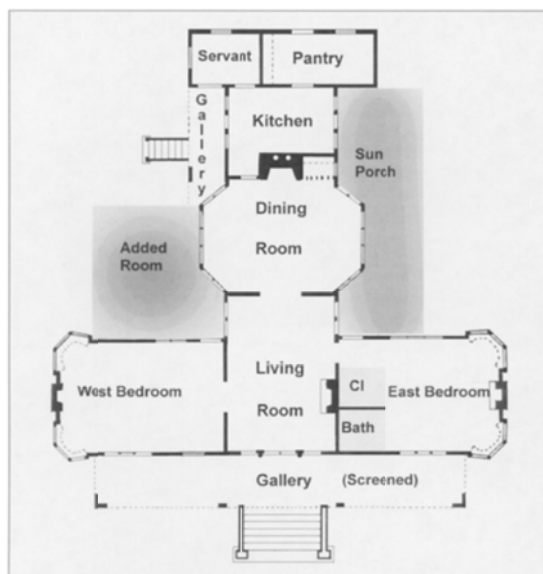


Figure 40: Charnley- Ruddiman house¹²⁹
(image credit: Phillipe Oszuscik).

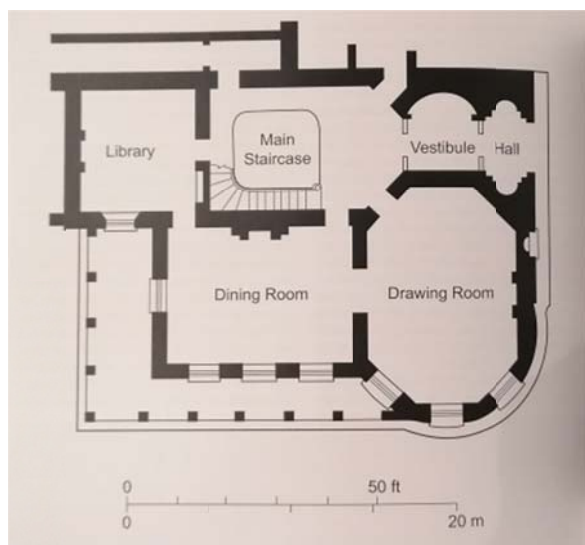


Figure 41: Cronkhill House (image credit: EH in John Nash Architect of the Picturesque).

Scully (2006) recognised the similarities between Wright’s Oak Park, and the William Kent house (1885), by an American architect, Bruce Price, which were built as part of Tuxedo Park Village, New York, in the style of the cottage ornée. These structures were built as part of the architectural trend of the period to create an American domestic development, drawing

¹²⁷ Wright was the draughtsman for Sullivan at the time (Oszuscik, 2009).

¹²⁸ It is probable that Repton that was the artist for the Nanteos drawings, therefore, the images may have been added to Repton’s work, making the images widely available. Repton became well known; he was mentioned several times in the *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (Loudon, 1846) and also in *A Treatise on the theory of landscape gardening, adapted to North America* (Downing, 1841).

¹²⁹ Lozenge shaped room similar to that of Cronkhill.

on the vernacular styles and craftsmanship of America, that referenced back to the Shingle, Colonial and Art and Crafts principles (Oszuscik, 2009). These were architectural ideas inherited from British Picturesque styles of the cottages ornée, such as the layout of Vine cottage in Blaise Hamlet¹³⁰. These consists of a cruciform floor plan, three principal rooms, bay windows, long front loggias, a central porch and hipped roofs, reflected in Sullivan Minor house.

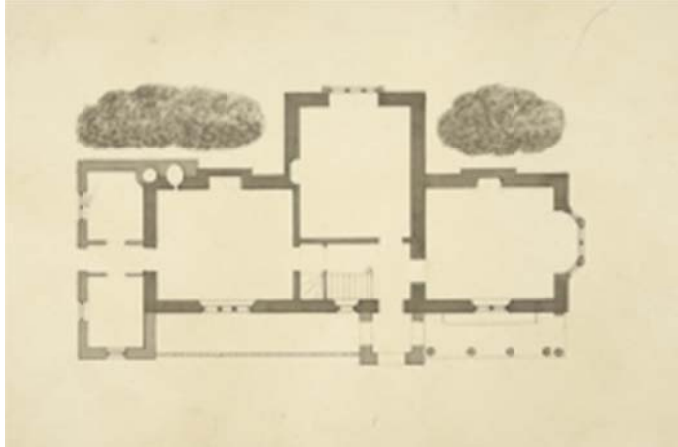


Figure 42: The loose cruciform plan of Vine cottage, Blaise Hamlet¹³¹ (image credit: RIBA pix).

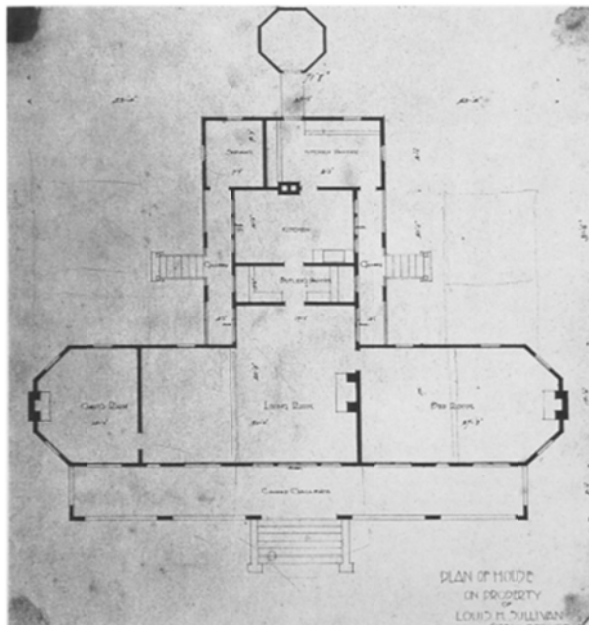


Figure 43: Cruciform plan of the Sullivan Minor house¹³² (image credit: Phillipe Oszuscik).

¹³⁰ Site visit E, 2022.

¹³¹ Note the three principal rooms, bay windows, a central porch and long front loggias.

¹³² Note the three/four principal rooms, bay windows, long front loggia and the octagonal guest house.

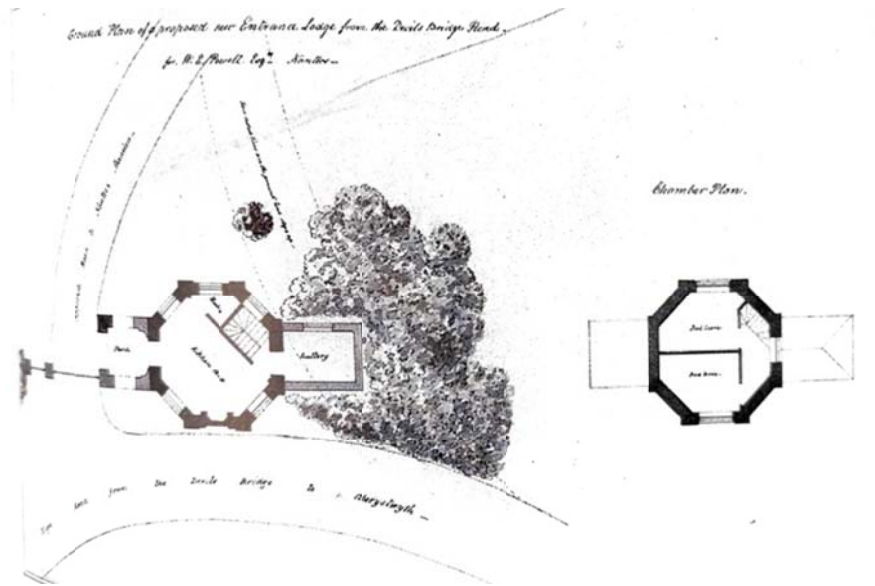


Figure 44: Octagonal plan of the gatehouses at Nanteos (image credit: Richard Suggett).

It was observed on a site visit that the cottages at Blaise Hamlet were constructed of rubble stone, the roof styles vary from thatched to hipped, cross-gabled and diamond with stone tiling ascending in size. Large, elaborate chimney stacks, with projecting first floors, curved stuccoed corbels, pointed eaves and cross patterned glass are reminiscent of Tudor revival style houses¹³³.

It is thought by Temple (1979) that the cottages and the village park design at Blaise were hastily designed, artificial and lacked a precedent, uncharacteristic of any of Nash's previous designs. Nash himself even described it as,

"...a source of occupation and amusement" (Temple, 1979, p.106).

Tyack (2022) explained during the interview that "... the idea of the village scene is Picturesque, and estate cottages could look better if they are made to look like improved version of a vernacular cottage, rather than a miniature classical building. Nash and Repton were not the first to design a suburban village of this style, but they were the first to do it effectively"¹³⁴.

¹³³ During the Chicago World Fair, the building erected by Great Britain, named Victoria House, was designed in the Tudor style, by Robert E. Edis of London, with terracotta and brick facings on the ground floor, banding and half-timber construction on the upper floor with prominent chimneys and projecting gables. The ceiling of the great hallway was modelled on *Plas Mawr*, in Conwy, discussed further on in this Chapter of the dissertation. Wright was known to have visited the Fair (Pascoe, 1893).

¹³⁴ Nash was not the first to explore urban planning; Hawksmoor had done the plans for Oxford in 1720. Nash was more effective at it (interview with Tyack, 2022).



Figure 45: Blaise Hamlet, Henbury ¹³⁵ are a group of nine differing cottages surrounding a central green (image credit: Pinterest).

Nonetheless, precedents can be considered in the cottages designs for Dr. John Matthews at Belmont, Clehonger, Herefordshire (1800). Nash produced numerous designs of cottages for the Belmont estate that contributed to a village setting¹³⁶ (Temple, 1979).

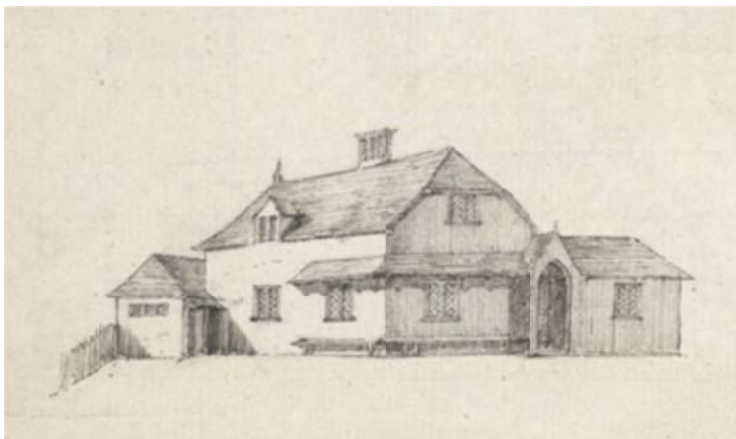


Figure 46: Drawing of a cottage at Belmont estate, designed by Nash and drawn by George Repton, circa 1798-1805, whilst he worked at Nash's office (image credit: RIBA pix).

Furthermore, Hay Castle house, Hay-on-Wye, located 17 miles west from Clehonger, is an early Renaissance style house¹³⁷, which retains elaborate bricked, star shaped chimneys (Smith, 1975) a typology commonly found on the borderland of Wales (Appendix D). Star shaped chimneys were imitated by Nash at Diamond cottage, Blaise Hamlet, thus defining a national vernacular.

¹³⁵ Designed for John Scandrett Harford, to house retired staff from Blaise House, for whom Nash also designed Blaise Castle House conservatory and dairy, after being introduced by Humphry Repton (Site visit E, 2022).

¹³⁶ At least six cottages were designed for Matthews, two of which similar to the cottages at Blaise, it is unknown how many were built (Temple, 1979).

¹³⁷ (Smith 1975), design by James Boyle in 1660 (Haslam, 1992).



Figure 47: Diamond Cottage, Blaise Hamlet (image credit: Jaycie Corbett).



Figure 48: Hay Castle House, Hay-on-Wye (image credit: breconbeacons.org).

To compare, the cottages at Blaise Hamlet and Oak Park are both located in a suburban village, set in the landscape, drawing on the vernacular style. Oak Park and Vine Cottage in particular, have prominent geometric front gables, a definite classical triangle, as if emerging from the structure, exaggerated by wide, over-hanging eaves. There is layering of front, middle and back composition, designed to be seen at oblique angles and a strong emphasis on the verticality of the large central chimney. The bay windows and deep-set loggias, formed as part of the plan, transition smoothly from inside to outside. Asymmetry in both massing and on plan breaks the box of the Classical form.



Figure 49: Oak Park, Wright's home and studio¹³⁸ (image credit: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation).



Figure 50: Vine cottage at Blaise Hamlet (image credit: Historic England).

¹³⁸ Similarities of deep set loggias, large brick chimneys left of the composition, timber clad gable, gable window, framed by trees.

Further observation shows the similarity in the original floor plan of Oak Park and Cronkhill. Both staircases are located opposite the entrance doorway; the fireplaces are in the centre of the buildings, relating back to fireplaces that are covered under the single central stack typologies of Welsh architecture¹³⁹. The deep loggias around the left hand perimeter extend out, interweaving with the interior space. Evidently, there a three-sided lozenge shaped living room in Oak Park, mirroring that of the drawing room at Cronkhill. It seems Wright has lifted the form of the curve of the vestibule at Cronkill, extended it out and used the shape to form the veranda at Oak Park.

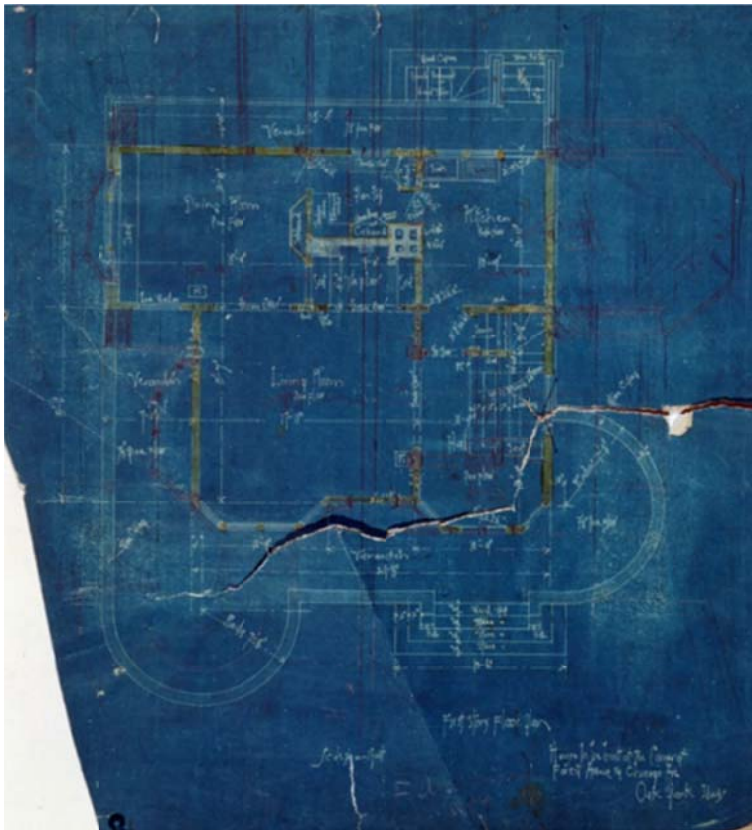


Figure 51: Original floor plan Oak Park home (image credit: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives).

¹³⁹ Smith, 1975.

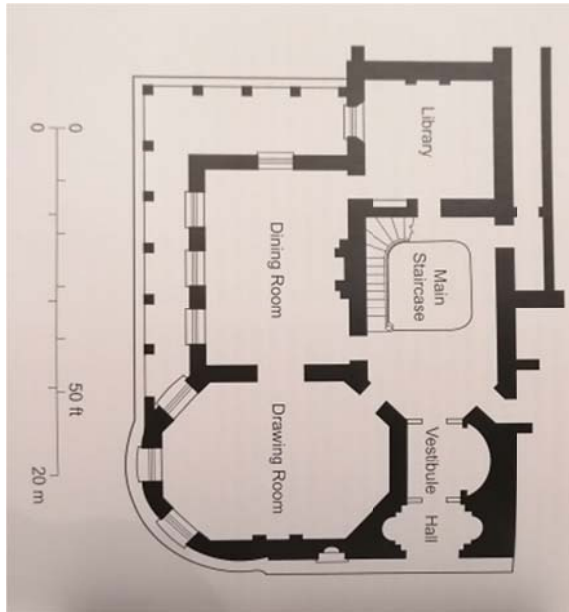


Figure 52: Rotated floor plan Cronkhill house (image credit: EH, John Nash Architect of the Picturesque).

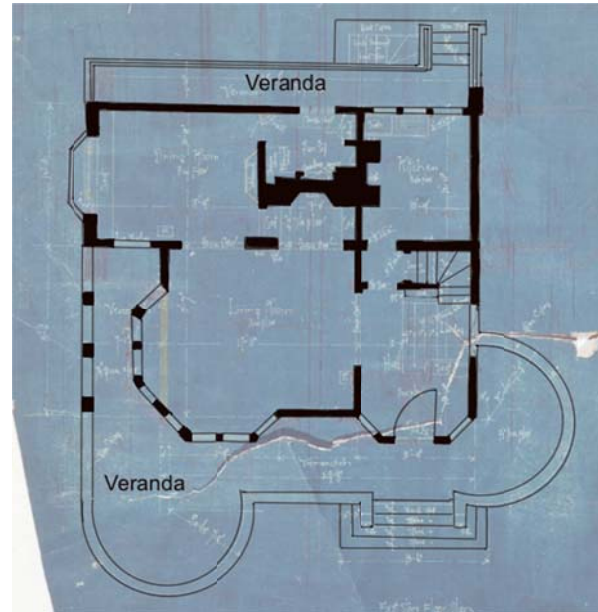


Figure 53: Floor plan of Oak Park home,¹⁴⁰ redrawn (image credit: Jaycie Corbett).

Wright's use of the octagon shape for the library at Oak Park, was also used for the design for the stair tower at the William Winslow house (1893) and later, the Romeo and Juliet water towers, for his aunts at the Hillside Home School, Spring Green 1896¹⁴¹. These are likely to have been influenced by Viollet-Le-Duc's book, *Dictionnaire Raisonné* (1858) as Wright had the notion that this was the only sensible book on architecture in the world¹⁴². The octagon plan is historically related to churches and cathedrals and the book shows examples of octagonal towers such as la bastille Saint Antoine¹⁴³ and was influential in forming Wright's architectural philosophies¹⁴⁴.

Nonetheless, Nash's three octagonal towers of Castle House built for Uvedale Price in 1790¹⁴⁵ the octagonal library at Hafod Uchtryd in 1794¹⁴⁶ and Luscombe Castle in 1800, that Nash designed with Repton¹⁴⁷, all predates Viollet-Le-Duc's book. It is also significant to note that in the aforementioned book by Repton, describes a completed commission of an octagonal pavilion with removable sides at Plas Newydd, Anglesey (Repton, 1805).

¹⁴⁰ Note the following figures: the central fireplaces, three sided windows, entrance staircase and verandas that wrap around the left side of the building, the curve of Nash's vestibule extend out to create verandas on Wright's plan.

¹⁴¹ Wright, 1957.

¹⁴² Scully, 1971.

¹⁴³ Viollet-Le-Duc, 1858.

¹⁴⁴ Hoffmann, 1969.

¹⁴⁵ Suggett, 1995.

¹⁴⁶ Lloyd, 1987.

¹⁴⁷ Luscombe was designed in the style of domestic Gothic revival. Nash along with Repton's working drawings (in the red book of Luscombe), designed a 'natural house in a natural landscape', creating a simplified style of Classicism (Girouard, 1980).

Further confirmation of Wright's influenced by Nash and the Picturesque is seen in his early work, the monolithic structure of brick, stone and terracotta frieze of the William Winslow house (1893), River Forest that resembles an eclectic mix of idioms.

Wright incorporated classical overtures in the form of Romanesque style arched corridors and a series of timber arches, comparable to the Tuscan loggia arches at Cronkhill, which divides the raised inglenook from the room. Sullivan's influence is highlighted by the ornamented features of the tops of the arches.

The ordered symmetrical arrangement of the uniformed Classical frontage¹⁴⁸, (Frank Lloyd Wright Trust, 2023b), with the low roof, overhanging eaves emphasising on the sense of shelter, are in sharp contrast with the asymmetry of the rear elevation. The dynamic roof heights, the massing of geometric forms and the verticality of the octagon stair tower, correspond to a Renaissance rear stair turret of houses in the Welsh countryside, seen at Plas-Mawr, Conwy (1580), allowed Wright the opportunity and freedom to experiment with new ideas, maintaining a prestigious front and a humble back¹⁴⁹. Nash had a similar approach with the design of Cronkhill with a Classical smooth stuccoed, uniformed façade and an informal rear of red brick, as an experimentation of roof levels¹⁵⁰.



Figure 54: Octagonal stair tower at Winslow house (image credit: imagepbs.org).



Figure 55: Plas Mawr, Conwy¹⁵¹ (image credit: Visit Snowdonia).

The axial plan with a central chimney¹⁵² as discussed in Chapter two, from which the entry hall, the library and living space is arranged, is not dissimilar to the abstract geometry of the

¹⁴⁸ Arguably, Scully (2006) suggested that the front door and windows were influenced by Mayan masks.

¹⁴⁹ Smith, 1975.

¹⁵⁰ Yallop, 2013.

¹⁵¹ Rear elevation with two octagonal stair turrets in view. The front elevation is symmetrical and ordered.

¹⁵² Secrest, 1998.

Renaissance square plan, when the chimney was traditionally sited opposite the entry, allowing the fireplace to be the focal point of the room, also combining the central chimney with a central stair. Examples can be seen in Trimley Hall, Flintshire (1653) where the rooms are gathered round a central stack, the fireplaces face two external walls, and the chimney forms the focal point of the roof, where the hips centre to it¹⁵³.



Figure 56: Trimley Hall, Flintshire (image credit: Coflein).

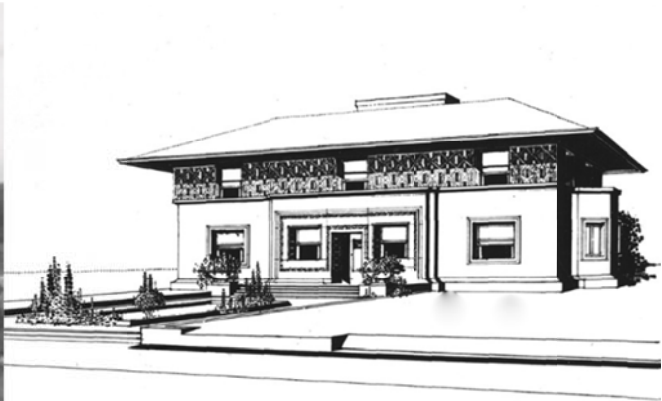


Figure 57: Drawing of the Winslow House (image credit: Frank Lloyd Wright Archives).

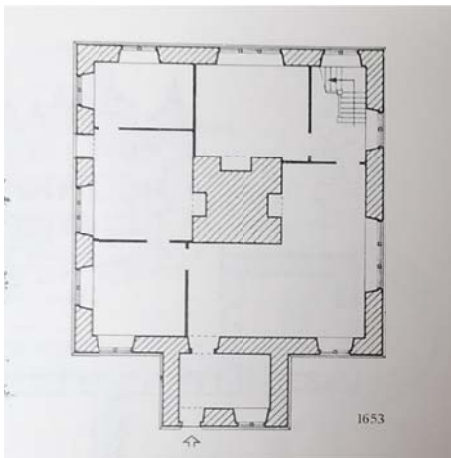


Figure 58: Cube plan with a central chimney at Trimley Hall, Flintshire (image credit: Peter Smith).

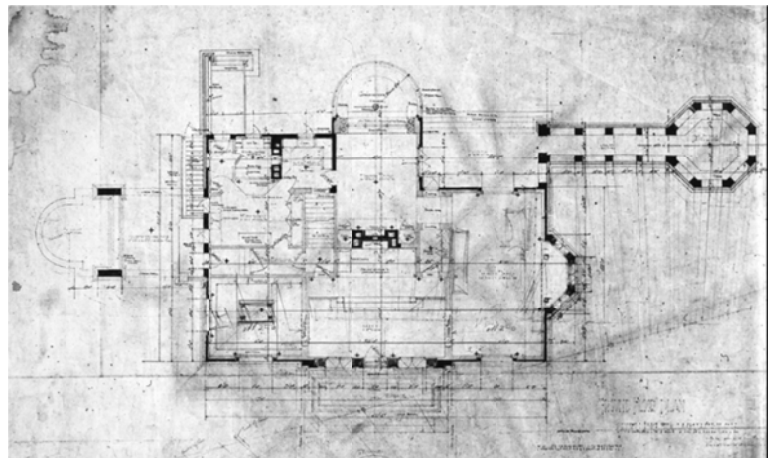


Figure 59: Square floor plan of the Winslow house¹⁵⁴ (image credit: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives).

¹⁵³ Smith, 1975.

¹⁵⁴ Central chimney front porch and an octagonal summer house reflecting the work of Sullivan and Repton.



Figure 60: Drawing of the Winslow House with outside summer house in view (image credit: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives).



Figure 61: Drawing of Repton's octagonal summer house at Plas Newydd, Anglesey (image credit: *Observations on the theory and practice of landscape gardening* by H. Repton).

Although Wright came to reject Renaissance architecture (Secrest, 1998) the Winslow house was important in his career and embodied the characteristics of Wright's Prairie houses (Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, 2023b).

Conclusion

This dissertation has explored an unusual comparison between two world renowned architects from different eras and philosophies, brought together to consider their Welsh identity.

This dissertation has also discussed the origins and the development of Nash's Picturesque style buildings that were built predominantly in Wales, and how his designs were taken to North America, adapted and developed, thereby connecting with Wright's ethos of Organic architecture.

During the journey to establish links between Nash and Wright's Welsh identity, overlaps in their work have become apparent, new information was discovered during the research journey and any leads were investigated. During the research period process, the evidence demonstrated that there is a hitherto, previously unexplored connection between Nash and Wright with the common factors being Wales, Italy, landscape architects and nature.

It is evident from chapter one and two, that even though neither architect was born in Wales (with Nash's birthplace still to be confirmed), their Welsh heritage was dominant in shaping the lives of both individuals.

As has been shown in Chapter two of this dissertation, Wright was sentimental about the Lloyd Jones' family's nostalgia of Wales through literature and song. The source of comfort to him was the hearth (Wright, 2005), reminiscent of the gathering together of the family, the comfort and security of a family, especially as he came from a broken home.

A further, unexplored comparison was made between Wright's buildings and the houses of Wales as the similarities with Welsh chapels led the research towards domestic buildings. The successful analysis of the Renaissance layout of Trimley Hall, and the stair tower of Plas Mawr led to similar studies of Cronkhill House and Vine Cottage with Oak Park home and studio.

Wright's eclectic mix of styles at this stage in his career was experimental; therefore inspiration was sought from Sullivan and other leading architects of the period, such as Bruce Price, and also literature, that was available to Wright. This was also true for Nash's time in Wales, with the new experience allowing him to experiment with a new outlook towards his philosophies and to be influenced by his contemporaries.

In addition, direct comparisons were between Nash's chimney design at Diamond Cottage and with those of Hay Castle Mansion, Hereford by James Boyle, with a discussion about how the octagon tower was used by Nash and Wright in their buildings.

The findings of Chapter three of this dissertation provide key factors of how Nash and Wright were similar in their philosophical approach, innovation and working methods. Chapter three describes the development from the Prairie style to Organic architecture, deriving and originating from the Picturesque movement. Nature and placement of the building within the land is an ethos that the Picturesque movement and Organic architecture share; although organic architecture developed further to include the space within the building.

Chapter three also supports the evidence that Wright was inspired by the ideology of, and way of life in Italy, the culture as well as the architecture, wanting America to adopt the same principles with a Usonian, all American architecture. Wright experienced the serene life in Fiesole and wanted to develop the Italian vernacular further by expressing Italian overtures in his home in Taliesin. Nash's Claudian villas were inspired from the paintings of Claude Lorrain¹⁵⁵, of the ideology of the serene life as seen in the design of Cronkhill House, Sandridge Park and Lissan Rectory.

Chapter three explains that Wright was not against the Renaissance style but against what had developed from it, disliking revival architecture in any form, preferring the purity of the original ethos.

Both Nash and Wright were hard working, with a sense of arrogance and confidence in the cross-disciplinary fields of engineering and landscape architecture. Both possessed the ability to successfully reinvent themselves after personal losses and bankruptcy, which may be why both had a good understanding for economic architecture: Nash with box villas and Wright with Usonian houses.

It is also essential to bypass the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement at this point as the movement did not support innovation or technology, unlike the philosophies of Nash and Wright.

As has been shown in Chapter three, Repton's work was pivotal in the development of Nash's career, blurring the lines between architecture and landscape architecture, which can be directly compared with the work of Mahony and Jensen, on behalf of Wright.

It is evident that the landscape architects, Vaux and Downing were key influencers in transporting Nash's Picturesque architecture to America. Nash's work was promoted through literature adapted to suit the American vernacular and subsequent emerging styles of design.

¹⁵⁵ Claude Lorrain (1604/1605-1682) was a French landscape painter. He spent most of his life in Italy and greatly admired in England, where aristocracy collected his work, and designed their country estates to resemble that of a Lorrain painting (Art UK, 2018).

Further study on this subject could include the confirmation of Nash's birthplace which has confused many scholars.

His Welsh roots remain a mystery, he inherited property in Carmarthen, but it is unclear who bequeathed it to him. Summerson commented on how it was a mystery how Nash found his feet in Carmarthen, as he was bankrupt leaving London, yet would he still have been accepted in society if he was penniless and had no connections to Carmarthen (Summerson, 1980)?

At the time of Nash's arrival in Carmarthen, the town was considered to be bilingual yet most parts of Wales were predominantly Welsh speaking. As we know that Nash socialised with the local gentry it is worth investigating whether there was a class divide or not regarding the two languages and whether it mattered if Nash could speak Welsh or not.

Initial searches revealed scant information about the previous ownership for the house in which Nash lived in Carmarthen (albeit a modest one that is difficult to comprehend that he had anything to do with it).



Figure 62: Nash's home in Carmarthen (image credit: Jaycie Corbett).

As aforementioned, a more thorough search of parish records might reveal information that has been written down incorrectly or omitted. Researching material within other architectural archives¹⁵⁶ at the RIBA library, such as correspondence or drawings may shed light on the historical ownership of the bequeathed house in Carmarthen.

¹⁵⁶ Such as those archives at the British Architectural Library at the RIBA Library.

Wales does not have many historical Welsh Architects¹⁵⁷ that have made an impact on architecture in the last 250 years; therefore researching this topic further would be beneficial to Welsh architectural history to prove that Nash was Welsh.

Further investigation with the family of Wright might reveal why he only visited Wales on a single occasion in his lifetime.

This dissertation has discussed at some length how Wright embraced his Welsh roots in his lifetime and that the (Welsh) country “adoption” was not just a label adhered to him after he had died.

Wales can firmly be part of Nash’s and Wright’s legacy.

¹⁵⁷ Some well-known Welsh architects include, Sir Bertram Clough Williams-Ellis, CBE, MC (1883-1978), born in England and raised in North Wales, the designer of Portmeirion (Parks and Gardens, 2023a) and Sir Percy Thomas (1833-1969) whom was also born in England and moved to Wales to form a business partnership with his friend, Ifor Jones in 1912 (Parks and Gardens 2023b).

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Email correspondence with Helen Carter, owner of Ffynone Mansion, 23-26 November 2022.

Email correspondence with Stephen Cripps, owner of Blaenyralltddu, 5 December 2022.

Email correspondence with Glen Johnson, Historian, 02 November 2022.

Telephone conversation with David Jones, Archives Assistant at Carmarthen Library, 04 January 2023.

Conversation with Shona Prasad of Temple Druid, 4 December 2022.

Interview with Dr Geoffrey Tyack, MA MLitt Oxford, PhD London, FSA, FRHist.Soc., Emerita/Emeritus Fellow of Kellogg College, Oxford. 01 November 2022.

Conversation with Ceri Urmson, Visitor Assistant, Bristol Museums 28 October 2022.

SITE VISITS

Site visit A to St Fagan's National Museum History, Cardiff, 23 August 2022.

Site visit B to Fiesole, Florence, Italy, 26 August 2022.

Site visit C to Blaenyralltddu, Rhydowen, Llandysul, Ceredigion, 27 September 2022.

Site visit D to Llanerchaeron Mansion, Ciliau Aeron, Aberaeron, Ceredigion, 02 October 2022.

Site visit E to Blaise Hamlet, Henbury, Bristol, 28 October 2022.

Site visit F to Temple Druid, Maenclochog, Pembrokeshire, 04 December 2022.

Site visit G to Ffynone Mansion, Abercych, Boncath, Pembrokeshire, 14 January 2023.

Appendix A: Questionnaire for Dr Geoffrey Tyack MA MLitt Oxford, PhD London, FSA, FRHist.Soc., Emerita/Emeritus Fellow at Kellogg College, Oxford

The following questionnaire was sent, by email, to Emerita/Emeritus Fellow Dr Geoffrey Tyack, Editor of the Georgian Group Journal.

The questions were devised by the author of this dissertation.

1: There appears that there is some confusion in records information? Why was Nash' birthplace and his mother's name such a mystery?

2: We understand that Nash left Wales in 1796, leaving a successful business behind, what do you feel are the main reason for this, was Wales too confined/ limited? (As did Frank Lloyd Wright's family) It was fashionable to make you name in London....Dick Whittington...

3: Did living in Wales influence him and do you feel there was a Welsh identity to his work? Was he one of the first architects to draw on a vernacular architectural heritage?

4: Nash appears to have had the ability to change styles, do you think was he affected by fashion, style e.g., St David's Cathedral- his gothic interpretation was viewed as radical, and shocked the Purists, whom had it pulled down.

5: Do you think he was ahead of his time with his eclectic mix of styles, challenging the norm or was he client led/ focussed? Was he anti-establishment? He was not knighted even though he worked for the Prince Regent. I did read that he was influential and had a charming demeanour. (As was Frank Lloyd Wright)

6: In the book, Architect of the Picturesque, (p.73) it mentions that Nash ' Italianate style was imitated, is there evidence that his work did make it to America?

7: Nash was influenced by Thomas Johnes, landscape architect of Hafod and Uvedale Price, author of the book ' Essay of the picturesque' 1796, did he have any other precedents and was he on a quest to find his own philosophies? (As was Frank Lloyd Wright)

8: As part of Nash' Picturesque (and villa rustica philosophies), houses were to be in empathy with the natural landscape in which they were placed, Cronkhill was orientated to benefit views even though the front elevation is East facing, the loggia does not get the sun to it, and the south facing windows overlook the service wing, was it intentional or experimental?

9: Was religion important to him? Cross window detailing on a cottage in Blaise hamlet, cruciform floor plans and octagon floor plan, East facing front elevation.

10: Do you think Nash, along with Repton, were the first to explore urban planning with their designs for instance Blaise Hamlet?

11: Nash' financial situation was his ruin, was he an unsuccessful businessman, extravagant or did he not allow money to get in the way of his art? (As was Frank Lloyd Wright)

12: Do you think the Picturesque movement was an early interpretation/ influential on Organic Architecture as interpreted by Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright.

Responses were received at an interview with Geoffrey Tyack which was held on 1st November 2022.

Appendix B: John Nash senior will and testament

Just to be Intended in the parish of Saint Dunstan in the West
and after all my Just Debts are paid I Give and Bequeath unto
my Brother Daniel Magrath late of Stepney Causeway Middlesex
One pound One Shilling to be paid six Months after my Decease
& likewise my wife and Bequeath unto James Jones of St Dun a
Simolance One pound One Shilling to be paid six Months after
my Decease the Residue and Remainder of all my personal
Estate I Give and Bequeath unto Edmund Wells of Bolt Court in
the parish of St Dunstan in the West in the City of London whom
I do hereby Constitute and appoint the sole Executor of this my
last will and Testament revoking all former Bequests wills
and bequests by me here into in any wise or made declaring
ratifying and confirming this and his other to be my last will
and Testament in witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand
and seal this twenty seventh day of September in the year of our
Lord one thousand seven hundred and twenty two, Roger Magrath
Signed Sealed published and declared to be the last will and Testament
of Roger Magrath in the presence of us who have hereunto
subscribed our Names in the presence of the said Testator
Ray. Will. Coles.

This Will was proved at London the twenty eighth day
of September in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and
twenty two before the worshipful Andrew Colles Durand Doctor of
Laws and Jurisprudence of the Right worshipfull George Day also a
Doctor of Laws Master of the Bench or Commisary of the prerogative
Court of Canterbury lawfully Constituted by the oath of Edmund
Wells the sole Executor named in the said will to whom administration
was granted of all and singular the Goods Chattels and Credits of the
said deceased he having been first sworn duly to administer &c.

John Nash

John Nash of
the parish of Saint Mary Lambeth in the County of Surrey a
Millwright do make this my last will and Testament as follows
first I will and direct that all my debts and funeral Expenses be
fully paid and satisfied and all the Rest and Residue of my Estate
whatsoever and whosoever I Give devise and bequeath unto my
son John Nash (now living with Robert Taylor Esquire of the
parish of St Martins in the Fields Middlesex) and do appoint him
sole and sole Executor of this my last will and Testament hereby
revoking and making void all former wills by me heretofore made
In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the
twentieth day of July one thousand seven hundred and twenty two
John Nash Signed Sealed published and declared by the Testator as
and for his last will in the presence of us who have subscribed
our Names as witnesses hereto in the presence of him and of each
other witnesses Robert Roberts & John Alcock

This Will was pined at London the first day of September
in the year of our lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy
two before the worshipfull George Lewis Barron of Lawes and Burgess
of the right worshipfull hospital of St. Dunstons also doctor of Lawes Master of the
or Commissary of the prerogative Court of Cantorbury lawfully
constituted by the act of John Drash the son of the deceased and
John Exonor whom in this said will to whom administration was
granted of all and singular the goods Chattels and Credits of the
said deceased having both first sworn duly to administer

In the Name of God Amen Thomas Drash

I Thomas Drash of Wrotham in the parish of Wilsdon in the
County of Middlesex Esquire being weak in body but of sound and disposing
Mind Memory and understanding (praises be almighty God for the
same) and calling to mind the certainty of death and the uncertainty
of the hour thereof do make and declare this my last will and
testament in manner following (that is to say) I resign my soul
to almighty God my maker hoping and assuredly believing that
through the merits and mediation of my Lord and Saviour Jesus
Christ I shall obtain full and free pardon of all my sins and
my body to the earth from whence it was taken to be buried in
my family vault in the Church yard of the parish Church of
Wrotham in the said County of Middlesex in such sort and manner as
my Executors herein after named shall in their discretion think
fit and as to such worldly estate which it hath pleased almighty
God to bestow on me I dispose thereof as follows that is to say
I will that all the debts which shall be justly due and owing from
me at my death to any person or persons whomsoever and also
my funeral charges shall in the first place be paid as soon after
my decease as may be and whereas my eldest son John Drash
having a very ample estate and fortune of his own I therefore
only give to him my said son John Drash and to his daughter
Judith Drash the sum of one hundred pounds each for behooving
to be paid to them respectively within three months next after
my decease and I give and devise all those my two undivided fifth
parts or shares of and in all that freehold Capital messuages
or tenement called Wrotham house (wherein I now dwell) with
all the Coppers Raines Cisterns leaden pipes and fixtures as
thereto belonging and also of and in all the outhouses yards gardens
orchards fields stables and outbuildings with their appurtenances
whatsoever to the said Capital messuage or tenement belonging
or in anywise appertaining situate lying and being in Wrotham
aforesaid and also of and in all those five several freehold offices
or closes of meadows or pasture land containing by estimation together
thirty eight acres be the same more or less situate lying and
being in Wrotham aforesaid and near to the aforesaid Capital
messuage or tenement and also of and in all the
rights privileges and appurtenances to the same belonging
or in anywise appertaining and also all that my undivided

Appendix C: Agreement for the construction of the roof at St Peter's church, Carmarthen.

Articles of Agreement Indented had made Concluded and Agreed upon this Twenty second day of June — in the Twenty fifth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third by the Grace of God of Great Britain France and Ireland King Defender of the Faith and so forth And in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty five

Between John Nash and Samuel Saxon of the County of the Borough of Carmarthen Gentlemen of the one part And The Reverend John Rogers Clerk Vicar of the parish Church of Saint Peters in the County of the Borough of Carmarthen aforesaid, William Morgan and John Humphreys Churchwardens of the same, Thomas Bloms Mayor of the same Borough Esquire, Nathaniel Morgan of the same Esquire, The Reverend William Higgs Barker of the same Clerk, George Lewis of the same Esquire, Richard Le David of the same Esquire, Morgan Lewis of the same Merchant, John Williams of the same Rope maker, Thomas Williams of the same Mercer, Josiah Lewis Esq of the same Postmaster, John Webb of the same Mercer, Thomas Humphreys of the same Carpenter, Samuel Archard of the same Weaver, Edmund Stacey of the same Gentleman John Nichols of the same Wine merchant, John Morgan of the same Esquire, John Lewis of the same Esquire, Richard Philipps of the same Esquire, Thomas Jones of the same Esquire and Charles Lewis of the same Gentleman of the other part In manner following, That is to say.

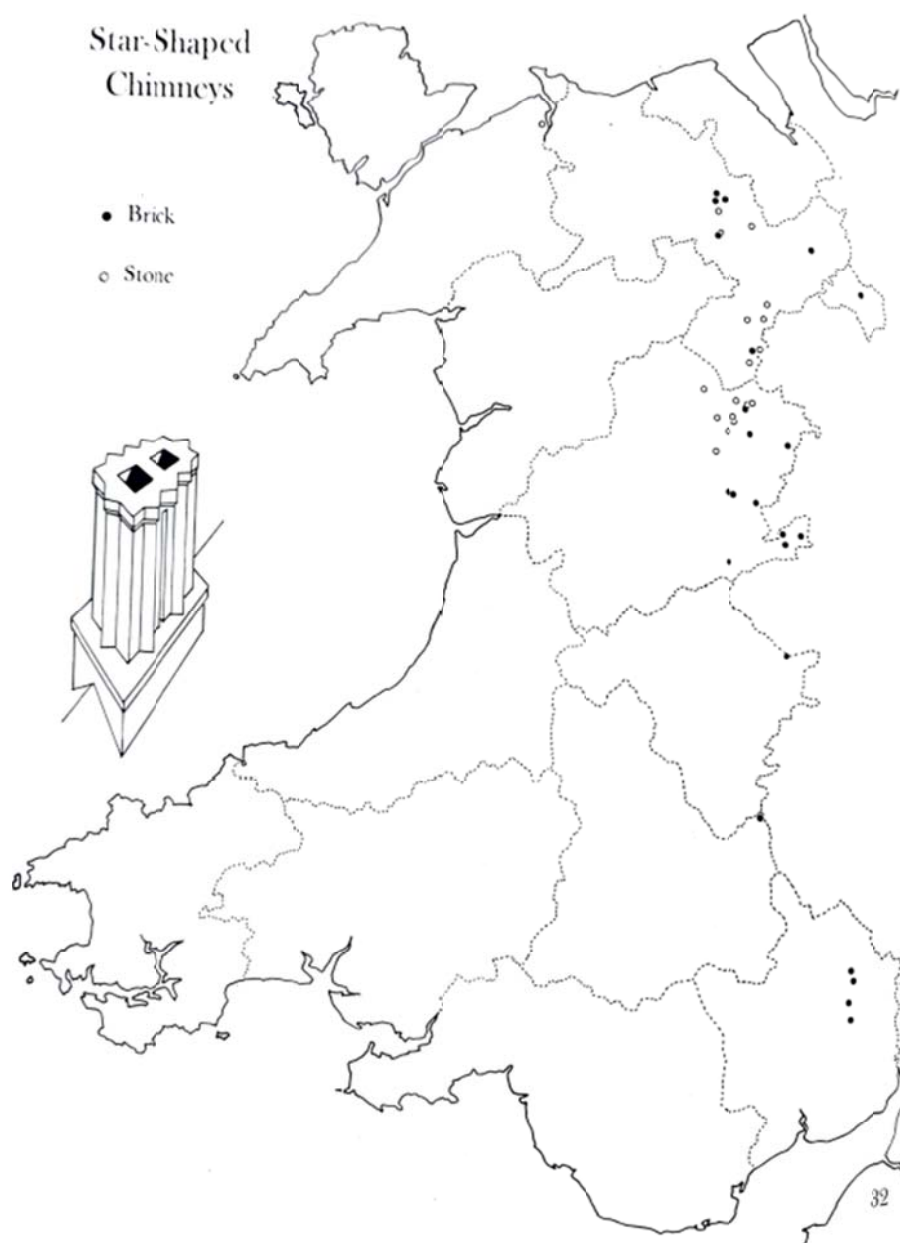
Whereas at a Vestry holden for the parish of Saint Peters in the said County of the Borough of Carmarthen On the Twenty sixth day of May last, the Ruinous state of the Roof of the parish Church of Saint Peters aforesaid being then Taken into Consideration, **It was** Unanimously agreed to approve of the Plan Offered by the said John Nash and Samuel Saxon and their Estimates thereof for Six Hundred and Seventy £ for taking Down the Old Roof and Erecting a New Double Roof on the parish Church of Saint Peters aforesaid The said Roof to be of good Oak with a Leadon Gutter so constructed as not to be Subject to the usual Leaking of the said Roof and the whole to be perfect and to stand firm and without any need of further Repairing **And** it was further Ordered, that a Committee should be appointed to inspect the said New Roof consisting of the following Gentlemen. The Reverend Mr. Rogers, The Church Wardens for the time being, The Mayor for his time being Nathaniel Morgan Esquire, The Reverend Mr. Barker, George Lewis Esquire, Richard Le David Esquire, Mr. Morgan Lewis, Mr. John Williams, Mr. Thomas Williams, Mr. Josiah Lewis, Mr. John Webb, Mr. Thomas Humphreys, Samuel Archard, Edmund Stacey, John Nichols, John Morgan, John Lewis, Richard Philipps, Thomas Jones and Charles Lewis or any or Either of them, or from or by or through any or either of their Viceroys or Proxies in Witness whereof the said parties to these presents have hereunto set their hands and seals the Day and year first within Written.

John Nash
Samuel Saxon
John Rogers
William Morgan
John Humphreys
Thomas Bloms
Nathaniel Morgan
William Higgs Barker
George Lewis
Richard Le David
Morgan Lewis
John Williams
Thomas Williams
Josiah Lewis
John Webb
Thomas Humphreys
Samuel Archard
Edmund Stacey
John Nichols
John Morgan
John Lewis
Richard Philipps
Thomas Jones
Charles Lewis

(Document credit: Hayden Burns, Carmarthenshire Archives).

Appendix D: Star shaped chimneys

Map showing the location of the star shaped chimneys along the border between Wales and England.



(Image credit: Peter Smith, Houses of the Welsh Countryside).