

Dissertation Synopsis

M5X01981 History & Theory 2

Jaycie Corbett, 2004014, 2022/05/03

Introduction

I have chosen to study the works of John Nash (1752-1835) and Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959), for their connections to my local area, in West Wales. It interests me to know if having a Welsh heritage was significant to them and was it expressed in their work.

Nash's buildings are prevalent in Wales, I am interested in how they are perceived and their relevancy to Wales' national identity.

Frank Lloyd Wright was raised by his Welsh/American family, I would like to know what was his understanding of Welsh culture and architecture.

Question

Is a Welsh national identity in architecture reflected/or evident in the work of John Nash and Frank Lloyd Wright?

Methodology

For the research of this dissertation, I will engage in:

- Library/ documentary research.
- Site visits, where possible.
- Online/phone/in-person interviews with key people such as those from the National Library, Aberystwyth, National trust for Wales, Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, local Historians and surviving family members.
- Fieldwork studies with users of Nash's building.

Aims

The aims for this dissertation are:

- Analyse what constitutes as a national identity in Wales.
- Did a Welsh heritage shape the work of Nash and Wright, professionally and socially.
- Were elements of vernacular architecture considered in Nash's work and how were they expressed?
- To what extent did Welsh architecture influence Wright's organic Architecture?
- Investigate if Nash's Architecture, influenced domestic housing design.
- Does Wright's organic Architecture influence the designs of contemporary Welsh Architects?

Objectives

- Consider the perception of Wales by Nash and Wright.
- Determine what techniques Nash and Wright used to introduce Welsh identity in their designs.
- Visit St Fagans, National Museum of history, Cardiff, to establish vernacular architecture and building typology of Wales.
- Case study- Visit Nash's Llanachaeron villa, Aberaeron.

Literature review

There are several documents and books relevant to this dissertation, which are:

- “The Valley of the God Almighty Jones’s”, by Wright’s sister. (Wright-Barney, 1965).
- “John Nash: Architect in Wales”, (Suggett, 1995, p.65).
- “Life in the English country house: a Social and Architectural history” (Girouard, 1980, p.119).
- “A National Architect? Percy Thomas practice and Welsh National identity”, (Davey, 2013).
Chapter 2: Nation, Nationalism and the built form. Chapter 3: The development of Welsh Nationalism and Nation buildings in Wales.

Limitations

The limits to obtaining information will be:

- Distance- Limited site visits, phone calls and online interviews in America, for information on Wright.
- Limited or difficulty accessing historical information/ paperwork.
- Issue of biased opinions regarding historical data- many books have been written about both; difficult to know which are true.

Ethical considerations

Data protection- be mindful of privacy and sensitivity of existing family’s personal information, and permission to put information in to print.

Timeframe

I expect to complete elements of the dissertation by the following dates:

- Purchase/source/read books by September 2022
- All site visits including case study by September 2022
- Questionnaires (if any) sent out and interviews completed by November 2022
- Collate information by January 2023
- Analysing data and begin writing in February 2023

Conclusion

It is possible that there will be no evidence of national identity in Nash’s work. His architecture was mainly Palladian style, Welsh vernacular architecture did not inspire him.

Wright had subtle elements of Welsh identity in his work, possibly influenced by his Welsh family.

Wright’s organic philosophies relates to the Welsh landscape, which influences contemporary Welsh Architects today.

Word count 538.

Tutor preference:

Ian Standen (and Liz Walder)

Reference list

Davey, E (2013) *A National Architect? Percy Thomas practice and Welsh National identity*.

Unpublished PhD thesis. Cardiff University. Available at:

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Girouard, M (1980) *Life in the English country house: a Social and Architectural history*. New edn.

London: Penguin Press, Chapter 5, The formal house: 1630-1720.

Suggett, R (1995) *John Nash: Architect in Wales*. The National library of Wales.

Wright Barney, M (1965) *The Valley of the God Almighty Jones's*. 1st edn. New York: Appleton Century Press.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/llanerchaeron/features/john-nash-villa>

<https://www.museum.wales/stfagans>

<https://www.franklloydwright.org>