Graphisoft® ArchiCAD® Brings Original Frank Lloyd Wright Design to Life for the First Time

Renowned Wright Scholar and Architect Creates 3D Virtual Building Model of Island Home Using Original Sketches; Construction Underway in New York State

In testament to ArchiCAD’s versatility and power, an original Frank Lloyd Wright design of a home is now fully modeled and documented in ArchiCAD® - and the building itself is now under construction. While Wright designed this home more than 50 years ago, only now will his vision be fulfilled as construction progresses on this set of drawings.

Architect Thomas A. Heinz, AIA, a renowned Frank Lloyd Wright scholar and leading authority on Frank Lloyd Wright designs, was selected as the architect to model the house based on five sketches drafted with pencil and paper by Wright. The original client had hired Wright to design a home on a remote, private island in New York, but ultimately chose a different scheme on an alternative site nearby. When the new client, who revitalized this project, approached Heinz, the Architect realized he needed a tool that would allow him to model the complete, original design set and visually communicate Wright’s design intent.

“Frank Lloyd Wright had sketched the floor plan and identified each room and its location, but other than that, there were no other details available for reference. The virtual model I was able to develop using ArchiCAD enabled me to share the design in a clear format that both the homeowner and contractor could easily understand,” said Heinz.

Graphisoft U.S., Inc.
One Gateway Center, Suite 302
Newton, Massachusetts 02458-2802 USA

Phone: 800-545-4223
Web: www.graphisoft.com
E-mail: info@graphisoft.com
© 2005 Graphisoft US.
Where most of Wright’s later, Usonian residences are structured to follow a rectangular/square grid, this home was based on a triangular form, with walls at either 60 or 120-degree angles. The building’s site also played a strong role in the layout of the plans. A 60-foot rock, known in the project as the Whale Rock, forms a wall in the entrance of the building, separating the kitchen from the utility room. In addition, part of the roof rests upon the Whale Rock. ArchiCAD allowed Heinz the flexibility to work with these challenges, following through on the designs as Wright intended.

“Other programs don’t understand how a building will actually stand up in its environment. With designs developed in the ArchiCAD Virtual Building™ model, you can really get the full feel and dimensions of the space. This became very important in the review and approval processes. We sped through approvals because everyone could immediately see what the building would look like, inside and out,” added Heinz.

This project is of great architectural significance; a Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house has not been built on its original site since the early 1960s. As the current client wanted to truly reflect Wright’s intentions, the house, 50 years after its initial inception, is finally under construction, and precisely mirrors Wright’s sketches.

“This project, with its intricacies and complex design challenges, is an excellent example of how the Virtual Building model can accurately reflect and document the building design before it reaches construction,” said Donald Henrich, vice president and general manager, Graphisoft US. “Frank Lloyd Wright was one of the most influential architects of his time, and we are thrilled to be part of a project of this caliber and significance in the architectural community.”