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Local companies help restore home designed by Frank Lloyd Wright

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Two Columbus-based companies are involved with the restoration of an historic home in Springfield, Ohio — the Westcott House, designed by organic architecture pioneer Frank Lloyd Wright.

Built between 1904 and 1908 for successful Indiana businessman Burton Westcott, the Westcott House is a Prairie-style home, the only such home style to be designed by Wright in Ohio.

The home is characterized by several trademark features of Wright's organic style, including slightly pitched roofs, open interior planning and casement windows, giving the home an overall emphasis on horizontal space.

The home's detached carriage house, intricate wooden trellis and gardens, and two large concrete urns designed to hang large amounts of flowers also are typical of Wright's innovative ability to illustrate how a home can relate to its surrounding, natural world.

The architectural statement, however, wouldn't last long. In the 1940s, the Westcott House was drastically altered when it was converted into a multi-home apartment complex. Much of the home's original floor plan, as well



Photo courtesy The Durable Slate Company

Abi Ferati of The Durable Slate Company uncovered a hidden window casing during the restoration of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Westcott House in Springfield, Ohio.

as its fixtures, was removed or destroyed.

Now, a massive, multi-million dollar historic rehabilitation of the home is underway to transform the home into a public museum.

Spearheaded by the Ohio Historical Society and Springfield-based Westcott House Foundation,

and under the guidance of the architectural firms Chambers, Murphy, and Burge of Akron, and Schooley Caldwell Associates of Columbus, the museum's refurbishment is intended to bring the home back to its original, intended state.

(See Wright, Page 4)

(Continued on reverse.)

Wright

(Continued from Page 1)

Westcott House Foundation officials entered into a contract with The Durable Slate Company to oversee the first phase of the project, which involved a restoration of exterior elements of the building and a stabilization of the house and adjoining carriage house, which was completed last year.

"In doing this type of restoration, it's really important to discover and uncover the bones of the original structure," said Cherie Downey, vice president of public relations for Durable Slate.

"We're trying to go back to (Wright's) original plan when it was designed as a residence for this family. It's going right down to his original plans, including the landscaping and furniture pieces, so its going to be a place where people can go and walk through and see his design and his dream for this house, which was so ahead of its time compared to what the average architect was making for people in that day."

Recently, Durable Slate was given a nearly \$2.4 million contract to oversee the second phase of the building's restoration. Over the next 36 weeks, the company will update the home's mechanical systems, including the installation of an economically and environmentally friendly geo-thermal heating system, as well as reinstall

windows and perform a restoration of the building's exterior wood and stucco.

A restoration of the home's doors, woodwork, plaster and paint, as well as a return of the home's original cabinetry and fixtures will all be performed to bring the home back to its original appearance.

The landscape restoration of the home will include the addition of new concrete sidewalks, a terrace, a reflecting pool, and a series of gardens and pergola. The original plot lines of the property have now been recreated, and the home's neighboring house has been moved to accommodate the new landscaping.

The project is scheduled for completion in late spring of 2005.