**Remarks and Reflections by Lead Architect Anthony Puttnam**

Monona Terrace was Tony’s first project as a Taliesin apprentice.

Later, Marshall Erdman wanted Tony Puttnam to be architect of the convention center

The 90’s referendum was close- it was predicted that the “no” vote would win, but no one surveyed campus to find out how they would vote. It’s believed that the campus had pushed through the “yes” vote.

The building’s relationship to the State Capitol

**“The Capitol is abstracted.”**

* People say that FLW didn’t like classical architecture, but we do know that he was for building the Capitol, having seen the earlier building burn in 1904. (see Mollenhoff/Hamilton page 4)
* The Capitol and the Terrace are linked by a design vocabulary of arch, dome, color, curve, and sharing a common axis or set of directions. One thing we notice is that the Capitol belabors things and the Terrace is restrained, understanding that what it accomplishes is of greater importance than what it is.
* Curves and disposition of building in common, wings come out of both buildings. Colors were to be similar.
* Parapets of parking structure, fiberglass- reinforced concrete, and other concrete building “parts” all had to match in color.
* So the building contains an idea which is an example for a way to make cities a part of culture rather than the battlefield beyond the gates which we shut out. Urban space should combine the elements of a culture: history, human scale, charm, repose, beauty and nature. A hard problem but here is an example.
* By relating the Terrace and the Capitol, FLLW created a relationship and as a result created urban space. Facing the other direction, he created a relationship with the lake and hence nature. He combines two things very often seen as opposites: institutional culture, the city and nature.
* The reverse of this circumstance is the space we feel at the edge of the Grand Canyon, or the sea, under the sky, amidst mountains…Here we sometimes struggle to find a relationship with something vast. Monona Terrace is an example of a mediating object which joins the human scale and the vast.

At top of stairwell by Gift Shop

**“A monument to drywall”**

* Building benefited from Wright’s long period of design work (’38-’59) – vision became simplified.
* Skylight was not part of Wright’s drawings but Tony thought it seemed a natural place for it.
* Tony realized after the design that our dome is a half sphere and looks flat compared to a true dome.

Grand Terrace windows

**“The building has remarkable transparency.”**

* It’s characterized by extraordinary openness and lightness; it embraces the lake, wind, and sky.
* Grand Terrace window arches reflect those that appear in transepts of the Capitol.

*Transept is defined as:*

* *any major transverse part of the body of a church, usually crossing the nave, at right angles, at the entrance to the choir.*
* *an arm of this, on either side of the central aisle of a church*
* It was possible to tighten the wires in the fiberglass arches above the Grand Terrace windows to reshape the forms.
* Sun reflecting off ice was so glaring that window had to be tinted blue.

Carpet

* Arches also appear in carpet.
* Chevron shape has the appearance of gingko leaves.

Why is this building off center?

* Railway and John Nolen right-of-ways could not be changed and so building is 3 degrees off axis (axis is MLK Jr Blvd connecting Capitol and Monona Terrace).
* The building sits on a steep bluff.
* Wright’s plan for Olin Terrace had 2 bridges leading to building instead of the one that exists now.

The project was a phenomenal effort on the part of the community-

**“A courageous building”**

* Workers slept overnight in the building; head electrical contractor broke his leg so he rode a bicycle through the building to get around.
* Rooftop tile campaign was very successful– pledge money for the tiles could be borrowed against.
* Governor Thompson asked Tony ‘is anything wrong down there?’ He had some concern when he saw variegated colors of pre-cast “t’s”. (Curing changes color of concrete).
* Opponents said, “If you told us it would’ve looked this good, we wouldn’t have fought you so hard.”
* Workers came to the dedication with their families.

Regarding Monona Terrace’s authenticity:

**“The project would have been inconceivable without him.”**

* I don’t think we’ve done anything that Wright wouldn’t have done. He was very open to change and changed this building constantly.
* The building will be 5% longer, the roof 6 inches lower. But other than that, it's pretty much the same. The arches, the curves, the deck, the indirect lighting - they're all there.

Tony’s reflections on Frank Lloyd Wright

* Mr. Wright was able to walk through a house in his mind and then draw it.
* Unpredictable and charming
* Boyish enthusiasm
* He taught through offhand remarks more than lecture.
* He dreamed of translucent buildings (changing the opacity of walls and roof) but materials were not there yet; he envisioned things that were not yet possible to construct.