Frank Lloyd Wright buildings gain UNESCO World Heritage Listing

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Eight buildings designed by America’s best known and arguably most accomplished architect, Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959), have been officially inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List by the World Heritage Committee.
The collection of buildings, formally addressed in the nomination as “The 20th Century Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright,” spans 50 years of Wright’s influential career and marks the first modern architecture designation in the United States on the World Heritage List. Of the 1,092 World Heritage sites around the world, this group of Wright sites joins an existing list of 23 sites in the United States.

Achievement of this prestigious listing was the result of many years of extensive, collaborative efforts led by the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy, the National Park Service, staff members of the nominated sites and a host of independent scholars.

“This recognition by UNESCO is a significant way for us to reconfirm how important Frank Lloyd Wright was to the development of modern architecture around the world,” said Barbara Gordon, executive director of the Conservancy.

Wright designed nearly 400 buildings during his long career, but most experts agree that the eight structures nominated for the World Heritage List are most representative of his work.

They include: Fallingwater, (Mill Run, Pennsylvania, 1935); Herbert & Katherine Jacobs House (Madison, Wisconsin, 1937); Unity Temple (Oak Park, Illinois, 1904); Frederick C. Robie House (Chicago, 1908); Taliesin (Spring Green, Wisconsin, 1925); Hollyhock House (Los Angeles, 1917); Taliesin West (Scottsdale, Arizona, 1937); and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York City, 1956).
UNESCO considers the international importance of a potential World Heritage Site based on its “Outstanding Universal Value” which, in the case of the Wright nomination, is manifested by three attributes:

1. It is an architecture responsive to functional and emotional needs, achieved through geometric abstraction and spatial manipulation.
2. The design of the buildings in this series is fundamentally rooted in nature’s forms and principles.
3. The series represents an architecture conceived to be responsive to the evolving American experience, but which is universal in its appeal.

All eight of the Wright buildings now inscribed on the World Heritage List are open to the public and offer regularly scheduled guided tours.
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