



# Finish Notes<sup>TM</sup>

The newsletter of architectural finishes investigation  
from Welsh Color & Conservation, Inc.

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## WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER

*There are many interesting topics related to the restoration of historic structures and conservation of paint and wallpaper finishes. We feel it is valuable to discuss and share our thoughts and discoveries with our many colleagues and clients around the country.*

*With the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more and more buildings from the early 1900's are being restored, placing new demands on our research and analytical expertise. Frank Lloyd Wright's Wingspread, completed in 1939, is a case in point.*

## Wingspread: Frank Lloyd Wright's Use Of Beeswax and Carnauba Wax

Frank S. Welsh announces the publication of an article in *The Microscope*, Vol. 47, (1999) titled: "Frank Lloyd Wright's Use of Wax at Wingspread for Clear Finishes and Paints".

Wingspread was built in 1939 in Racine, Wisconsin for Herbert F. Johnson, Jr., president of S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc. It was Wright's last and largest Prairie style house. An examination of the interior finishes was included as part of recent historic preservation efforts by The Johnson Foundation.

The documentary research and the results of the analytical effort to establish the color palette of Wingspread confirmed Wright's use of beeswax and carnauba wax. The placing of paint colors and natural wood finishes integrated his principles of organic architecture as well as the products of his client's company, Johnson's Wax.

In Welsh's article, the story of paint, color and wax come together in a way that emphasizes the importance of studying coatings associated with landmark buildings in a comprehensive way that extends beyond the routine examination of color and crosssections. The role of the polarized light microscope to study and identify pigments and media is underscored as is the supporting role of instrumental analyses including scanning electron microscopy and infrared microspectroscopy.

The project was more than an analytical one though, it compelled us to follow research leads into a wide variety of related topics, which in their own right had intriguing stories to tell.



*Wingspread, 1939, as viewed from the east.*

Please call or E-mail us your request for a free copy of Welsh's 22 page article on Wingspread, which contains 17 color illustrations of: the house, the original color palette, and photomicrographs depicting microanalytical techniques. Wingspread is also the Featured Project on our website.

## Frank S. Welsh Co. - Now Incorporated

You may have noticed in the masthead that we are now incorporated as *Welsh Color & Conservation, Inc.* This change took effect in January, 1999 and comes 25 years after the founding of the Frank S. Welsh Company.

## We Are Now On The World Wide Web

Welsh Color & Conservation, Inc. has a website. The address is: [www.welshcolor.com](http://www.welshcolor.com). From our home page you can go to nine different sections. These include:

- About Welsh Color & Conservation, Inc. - a corporate resume
- Historic Paint Analysis: An Overview - guidelines for planning and administering paint analysis projects
- Analytical and Consulting Services - how we can help you
- Color Products - a price list of Munsell and Custom color standards
- Paint Sampling Guide - updates the Paintpamphlet<sup>TM</sup>; describes where and how you can take paint samples to send us for analysis
- Color Matching New Paints - a comprehensive guide to color matching for architects, contractors and historic site administrators
- Publications - a complete list of every article we have published
- Major Projects Completed - our more well known projects
- Featured Project - profiles an interesting restoration project.