

Fact Sheet

SC Johnson and Frank Lloyd Wright *More than 75 Years of Inspired Architecture*

The relationship between Frank Lloyd Wright and H.F. Johnson, Jr. helped define Wright's career as much as it helped to define the Johnson Buildings in Racine. The first building Wright designed for the Johnson company was the Administration Building which opened in 1939, followed by the Research Tower which opened in 1950.

Known for being an architect ahead of his time and extremely modern, Wright described the Administration Building as "simply and sincerely an interpretation of modern business conditions designed to be as inspiring to live in and work in as any cathedral ever was to worship in."*

In 1936, third generation SC Johnson leader H.F. Johnson, Jr. sought out the architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Designs were in development for the company's new Administration Building, but H.F. wanted a new, more modern approach, even though ground had already been broken and construction was set to start when Frank Lloyd Wright was brought up as an alternative.

He later explained, "Anybody can build a typical building. I wanted to build the best office building in the world, and the only way to do that was to get the greatest architect in the world."

Thousands of Wright enthusiasts and admirers visit the SC Johnson campus each year to marvel at the still-modern architecture. From the 43 miles of Pyrex glass tubing to the dendriform columns, the Administration Building is truly a unique work of art that reflects the innovation, creation and adventure that is still the spirit of SC Johnson today. Visitors also admire the Research Tower, one of the tallest structures ever built on the cantilever principle, and explore the Frank Lloyd Wright Research Library.

The newest addition to campus is *The SC Johnson Gallery: At Home with Frank Lloyd Wright* which showcases a rotating selection of Wright's designs and artifacts and explores the legendary architect's influence on families and the American home.

Timeline

- 1936 First meeting of H.F. Johnson, Jr. and Frank Lloyd Wright
- 1936 Frank Lloyd Wright commissioned to begin designs for the Administration Building
- 1939 Administration Building opened
- 1943 Frank Lloyd Wright began submitting drawings for what became the Research Tower
- 1950 Research Tower opened
- 1967 The Golden Rondelle Theater (originally built for the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair) brought to campus
- 1976 The Administration Building and the Research Tower named to the National Register of Historic Places
- 1986 The American Institute of Architects named the Administration Building and the Research Tower among the 10 most successful examples of architectural design
- 2007 Fortaleza Hall groundbreaking conducted by Fisk Johnson, Chairman and CEO of SC Johnson
- 2010 Fortaleza Hall opens, with Frank Lloyd Wright Research Library inside

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- 2011 Long-term loan agreement between SC Johnson and Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation announced stating that SC Johnson will showcase Wright artifacts on historic Wright-designed campus
- 2012 Opening of *The SC Johnson Gallery: At Home with Frank Lloyd Wright*

Administration Building

- The Administration Building is the global headquarters of SC Johnson
- The construction of this building started in late 1936
- It opened in April of 1939
- The Administration Building is celebrated as one of the top 25 buildings of the 20th century

The Great Workroom

- The Great Workroom, which is located within the Administration Building, is renowned for its beauty and has been dubbed the "center of creativity"
- The Great Workroom has more than one-half acre of workspace
- Two circular elevators run from the basement to the Penthouse level of the Administration Building
- The elevators have an open design, allowing a panoramic view of the building and are nicknamed "bird cages" for their unusual appearance

The Great Workroom's Dendriform Columns

- Among the outstanding features in The Great Workroom and perhaps, the focal point of this building, are the dendriform columns
- Wright called the columns "dendriform," meaning tree-shaped. Because of their unique design, they are also called mushrooms, golf tees or lily pads
- These columns were revolutionary in design because the base has a diameter of only nine inches and the top has a diameter of 18½ feet
- Wright designed each column to support a weight of 12 tons according to The Wisconsin Industrial Commission's requirements. During the test of a column, it actually held five times that before showing signs of cracking

The Research Tower

- The Research Tower is one of the tallest structures ever built on the cantilever principle
- It stands 153 feet tall, and the central core, which is 13 feet in diameter, extends 54 feet deep into the ground
- Inside the core are the restrooms, elevator and stairway
- All 14 floors of the Research Tower are supported by the core; much like a tree supports its branches
- The Research Tower opened in 1950, inspiring scientists to create some of the company's greatest products like Raid®, Glade®, OFF!® and Pledge®

Frank Lloyd Wright Research Library

The Library is housed in Fortaleza Hall. It features:

- One of the largest collections in the country that's focused on Wright's unique contributions to a single community, Racine, Wis.
- More than 300 books about Wright and his career
- 54 magazines and bound publications
- 40 small pamphlets and clippings
- 250 digital drawings and blueprints

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- 125 digital interior, exterior and construction photos
- 140 digital reproduction of letters
- 18 videos
- An original Wright desk and three-legged chair from SC Johnson's Administration Building
- Information on three Racine Wright-designed buildings that were not built: the YWCA building, the Roy Petersen House and a café intended for the Racine airport (drawings, blueprints and correspondence)

The SC Johnson Gallery: At Home with Frank Lloyd Wright

The Gallery showcases an annually rotating selection of Wright's designs and artifacts and explores the legendary architect's influence on families and the American home. The first exhibit explores Wright's influential Prairie-Style, which established his reputation as a world-famous architect.

- The collection will continue to explore Wright's influence on the home throughout his career – including his American System-Built pre-cut housing venture of 1917 and his reinvention of the American home in 1940, as well as artifacts from the mid-1950s when Wright's work reached legendary scale.
- *The Gallery* is free and open to the public
- *The Gallery* is nearly 2,000-square-feet
- More than 500 hours were spent on conservation of the artifacts which includes a number of rarely or never-before-seen items such as a window from the Coonley Playhouse, a chair from the Frank Lloyd Wright Oak Park Studio (Ill.) and the Heath House Wall Sconces
- More than 20 photo reproductions and photo murals of designs, drawings and rooms
- *The Gallery* is co-curated by Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, Archives Director at Taliesin West in Arizona, and Brady Roberts, Chief Curator of the Milwaukee Art Museum.

The Golden Rondelle Theater

- Originally built as the Johnson's Wax Golden Rondelle Pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1964-65.
- After the fair closed, The Golden Rondelle Theater was dismantled and its steel framework was shipped back to Racine, where it was re-designed by Taliesin Associated Architects
- Taliesin Associated Architects was the architectural business formed by Wright's apprentices after his death; it is no longer in existence

Miscellaneous Facts about the Frank Lloyd Wright Buildings

- Wright used glass tubes to refract light and cut glare
- If laid end to end, the original Pyrex tubes would have extended over 43 miles
- Wright designed more than 40 different pieces of furniture for the Administration Building
- Each piece reflects aspects of the building's overall design
- The color used throughout the building is an earthy maroon-orange tint, which Wright called "Cherokee Red"
- The Administration Building was one of the first in the U.S. to be completely air-conditioned

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The Wright Destination

Located in Racine, Wis., a visit to SC Johnson offers a unique opportunity to see a number of architectural gems. The city sits within the 220-mile span between Oak Park, Ill., and Spring Green, Wis. Additional works of architectural importance in this area include:

- Wingspread, the home Wright designed for the Johnson family in 1937, in Racine, Wis.
- Taliesin, Frank Lloyd Wright's home and architectural laboratory in Spring Green, Wis.
- The Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio in Oak Park, Ill.
- The Robie House in Chicago
- American System-Built homes in the Burnham Street Historic District, Milwaukee
- The Jacobs House in Madison, Wis.

Visit SC Johnson

To celebrate The Gallery opening, SC Johnson has expanded hours for visitors. SC Johnson offers three tour programs which run from 1 hour to 3.5 hours. Tours are on Fridays and Saturdays and are all free of charge. They include:

- **The Legacies Tour (3.5 hours)** – SC Johnson's headquarters is home to remarkable legacies by inspired leaders. In this in-depth, 3.5-hour tour, explore the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Administration Building as well as the award-winning Foster + Partners-designed Fortaleza Hall with the Spirit of Carnaúba airplane soaring at its heart. See Sam Johnson's acclaimed film *Carnaúba: A Son's Memoir*, with its enduring family message, and enjoy the Academy Award-winning documentary *To Be Alive!* This tour also includes *The SC Johnson Gallery: At Home with Frank Lloyd Wright*.
- **The Landmarks Tour (2 hours)** – Designed in 1936, the Administration Building was the first project that Frank Lloyd Wright designed for SC Johnson. Renowned for its unique dendriform columns, open concept half-acre of workspace, circular "bird cage" elevators and 43 miles of glass tubing, this landmark is celebrated as one of the top 25 buildings of the 20th century. In this 2-hour tour, explore the Administration Building and visit the award-winning Foster + Partners-designed Fortaleza Hall. Then, enjoy *The SC Johnson Gallery: At Home with Frank Lloyd Wright*.
- **The Gallery Tour (1 hour)** – The 1-hour Gallery Tour is designed for those who want to focus on the new SC Johnson Gallery and its debut exhibit.

The Lily Pad, a unique gift shop featuring exclusive SC Johnson memorabilia and Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired items, is open in conjunction with all tours.

For more information on tours to the SC Johnson campus, please call (262) 260-2154, email Tours@scj.com, or use the online scheduling tool at www.scjohnson.com/visit

**As quoted in the Racine Journal Times, December 31, 1939*

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