

First Mr. Rawlings, I want to say thank you for buying and preserving the David and Gladys Wright house. It is turning out to be quite a journey.

As you know Frank Lloyd Wright originally designed the home for a couple in New Jersey but his adaptation to the Arcadia site was genius and certainly fortuitous for the Phoenix area. The authoritative book on the subject "How to live in the Southwest" that you have quoted often in your promotional materials refers to it lovingly as a "reworked generic project" thus falling a bit short of the 'Last Great Residential Masterpiece' moniker that you have bestowed upon it. But be that as it may, It is well loved and widely received and for its salvation all preservationists including me are thankful. The home is preserved you won! We won! Historic preservation won!.....But now you have to recognize the win and stop.

Very few people would debate against Arcadia being the finest neighborhood in Phoenix....and probably in Arizona and with that each family has their own reasons. For some its the estate sized lots, for others it the enviable values, and yet for others it would be our prime location and views. But for most of us we chose it for the family friendly atmosphere, the walkable and kid friendly streets, and the strong private residential character that pervades this community. I very sincerely hope that your final plans do not include asking this community to help you fundamentally change any of that. We will not and cannot stand by and submissively allow you to impose your will and grandiose plans on this historic community. What you are proposing is not wanted and it is simply not needed. Thus far you have shared that your vision for the former Wright Estate should include regular visiting hours attending to some 120,000 tourists per year, a 40' tall above ground music and performance amphitheater, A 40,000 square foot underground museum and an event center and all of the amenities necessary to service those attendees.

None of that fits with The Arcadia that I know and love. Your Plans will drive thousands upon thousands of people into our neighborhood and onto our streets in spite of your overtures to the contrary. Have you lived here long enough to experience the over crowded streets on Halloween? Who believed that would ever happen?

Thus far your campaign to win favor with Arcadia has been less than uplifting. You have referred to us as unsophisticated and Philistinian because we dared to suggest an alternative site better suited to your ambitions. The \$11,000,000 or so that you have invested thus far would go along way toward relocating that little house.

And, you have reminded us that “we need to keep an open mind”. I remain unsure why any of us who have vested our money and our family here “need “ to do anything other than to just enjoy where and how we live. But those are the instructions and we will dutifully follow.

The arrogance of your intentions and campaign to give Arcadia something that you believe will fix this sad little neighborhood is beyond normal reasoning and for me stunning. And please explain why and how preserving a beautiful architectural oddity must be turned into a Graceland of sorts to honor Mr. Wright...either one. Hasn't the Wright legacy been honored adequately enough yet? In the 63 years since it has been built haven't we learned enough?

Please excuse the angst that may be exhibited here, but many of us in the neighborhood are working very hard to preserve the historic Arcadia lifestyle that you threaten. And, we know that you are working very hard to find a way to leverage the Wright House into something way more than a simple preservation-restoration. Our local Councilman Diciccio disagrees with your intent to commercialize whether it be under the guise of a non-profit business enterprise or otherwise and pledges no support in that regard. He believes as we do that it is an inconsistent use and that it does not belong here. He made that very very clear at the most recent ACMNA annual meeting when he addressed you directly. Your response sadly is proposing to back another well funded candidate against him so as to further up the ante and vote him out of office since he supports the neighborhood and opposes your plans.

All of this sounds painfully reminiscent of business as usual in Las Vegas where I understand that you have spent most of your adult life. But please understand something. We won't be coerced, cajoled or scolded into believing that we are culturally inept, artistically backward or architecturally bankrupt for not embracing your vision. We just don't want it. Go ahead save the house, just don't ruin the neighborhood and we'll be sure to keep an open mind.

Jim Furcini