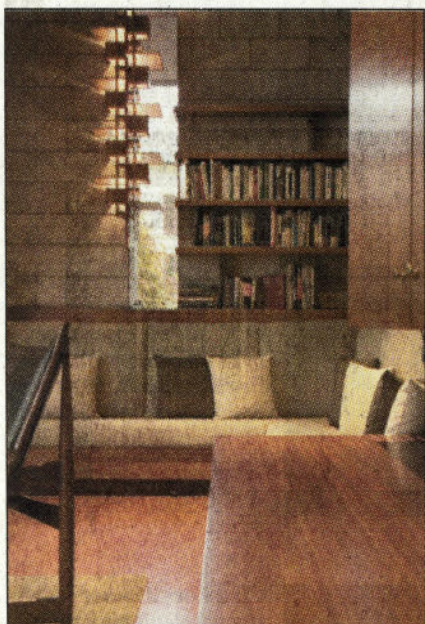


How Wright Home Went From Forlorn



Banquettes and built-in shelves and cabinets line the living room of the McLean home.

KIMSEY, *From Page 1*

is died in 2003, she moved to a retirement community.

"If it hadn't been a Frank Lloyd Wright house, I would have torn it down. It just happened that the right thing to do was restore it," Kimsey says.

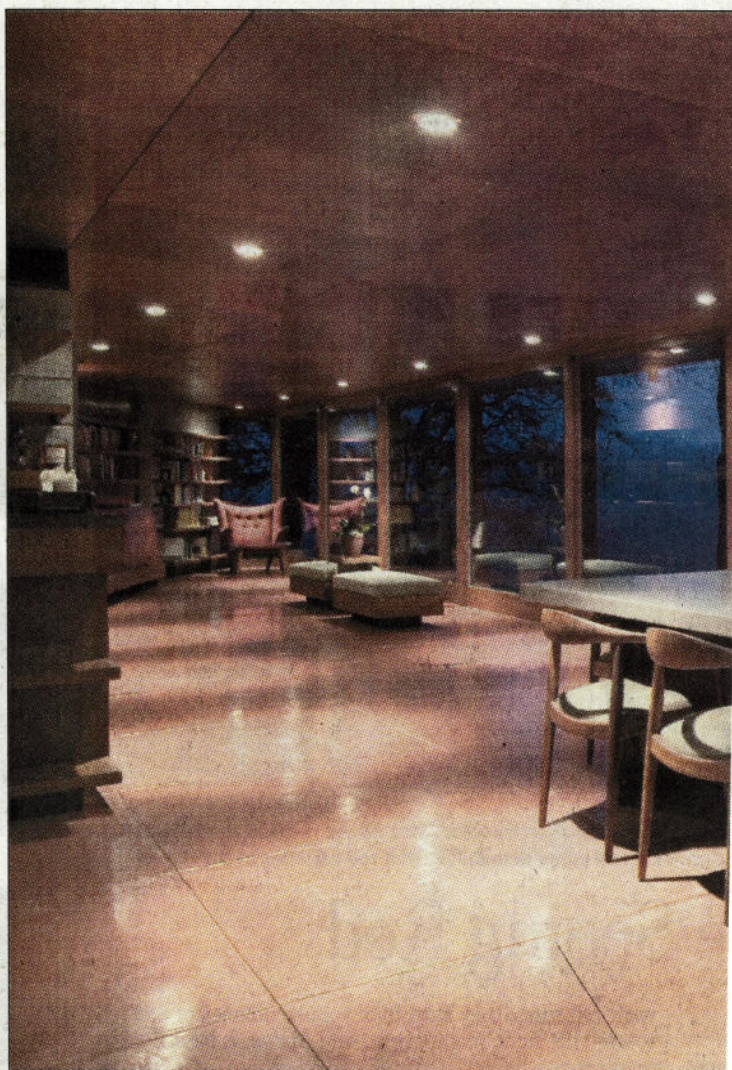
The more he learned about this Usonian house — Wright's term for the modest, modernist open-plan structures he designed of glass, steel, concrete, cinder block, brick and wood — the more he was smitten.

Everywhere were built-in shelves, cabinets, seating, desks, even matched closet drawers. And everywhere, too, were windows: some seven feet high, some eight inches wide, some partially covered by ornamental concrete or woodwork.

"Wright purists were horrified that I might renovate the interior," says Kimsey, 67, whose custom French Provincial house nearby includes four guest suites and enclosed parking for 40 cars. "I didn't need the two-car garage. I could have turned it into a bedroom. Of course, I don't need any more bedrooms either."

He spent 18 months and "well over \$1 million" reclaiming the 2,576-square-foot space. Mold was removed, a bright copper roof replaced the offending gravel, and outdoor lights were installed to illuminate the raging river at night.

"The house was bad, but it was intact and had not been altered," says contractor Bailey Adams of Chevy Chase, who oversaw the restoration. Cinder-block walls were water-stained; concrete floors were cracked. Planters on the terrace that runs the length of the house were so filled with dirt and debris that "it all was in danger of pulling away from the



In the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house, the public space comes to a point

hillside," Adams says.

Adams restrained living room cabinetry bleached by a half-century of direct sunlight. Every ceiling panel, including those in the garage, was removed, cleaned and refinished. The floors, murky with layers of wax and polish, were hand-scraped with razor blades. From officials at Johnson Wax — whose company headquarters in Racine, Wis., was designed by Wright in the 1930s — Adams got "the perfect cleaning and sealing products."

Today, the house is a showplace.

The living room is dominated by the cinder-block fireplace with a four-by-six-foot hearth. Banquettes hug the walls, and built-in cabinets hide a big-screen television. An original wooden sconce is more sculpture than light source. The dining area is defined by a new concrete-top table and eight 1950s chairs by Danish designer Hans Wegner, just steps from the original mahogany wet bar. The rest of the elongated public space is anchored by a wall of shelves and cabinets — one containing Wright's plans for the house.



The end of the room forms the prow of a ship. "It's probably the perfect place in the world I ha