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***PROCESS TO RESTORE MARTIN HOUSE LANDSCAPE UNDERWAY***

The Martin House Restoration Corporation (MHRC) announces the engagement of Bayer Landscape Architecture, PLLC of Honeoye Falls, NY to create the Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for the Martin House Complex. Charles Birnbaum, founder and president of the Cultural Landscape Foundation in Washington, DC, will consult on the effort.

The Darwin D. Martin House, a National Historic Landmark, is in the final stages of being returned to its former splendor as one of Frank Lloyd Wright’s major works from his Prairie House period. An accurately documented and rehabilitated landscape is vitally important and lies at the heart of this historic restoration of one of New York State’s most important architectural icons.

A Cultural Landscape Report is the principal document developed for historic sites or landscapes that will guide their management and preservation. Through the development of the report, Bayer Landscape Architecture will document the history, evolution and significance of the site’s landscape, and work with the MHRC to develop and recommend a comprehensive preservation treatment. This treatment will include an overall rehabilitation of the property’s historic landscape; the likely reconstruction of missing features based on historical evidence; and will enable thoughtful future stewardship of the landscape as a central component of Buffalo’s architectural treasure.

According to Wright’s “organic architecture” principles of integrating buildings with nature, the gardens and grounds of the Martin House were designed in harmony with its architectural elements and were integral features of the estate. The rehabilitation of the historic landscape will foster the interpretation of the entire estate, more effectively providing superlative educational and tourism experiences for the thousands of annual visitors to the National Historic Landmark. A New York State Historic Site, the Martin House is located in the Parkside Historic District of Buffalo, an established residential neighborhood laid out by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as part of his commission to design parks and parkways for the City of Buffalo.

Mary F. Roberts, executive director of the MHRC, noted, “The Cultural Landscape Report is a valuable planning tool that will guide our efforts to rehabilitate and protect the character-defining features of this noteworthy landscape. The process combines historical

documentation as well as an assessment of current conditions, significance and future usage. The resulting analysis will provide sound recommendations for the future treatment and management plans of the site.”

Mark Bayer, founder and principal of Bayer Landscape Architecture, commented, “The importance of the garden at the Martin House Complex is evident, not only in Wright’s layout for the buildings and grounds, but by the mere fact that Darwin Martin’s vision for his estate included space and infrastructure for the gardener right alongside his home and that of his sister. The gardener’s cottage, the greenhouse – these constructions became important to the Martins as they settled into their lives along Jewett Parkway. They signify the value the Martin family placed on the designed landscape and its maintenance.”

“A CLR is a vital tool as part of a historic properties’ overall, long term management and the stewards of the Martin House Complex are to be commended for commissioning one,” said Charles A. Birnbaum, Founder and President of The Cultural Landscape Foundation.

The CLR, which is supported in part by Preserve New York, a grant program of the Preservation League of New York State and the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), will lead to the implementation of the rehabilitated landscape throughout the complex in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes. Planned work will include a scholars’ workshop, supported in part by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, involving historic landscape consultants and experts in Wright’s work that is scheduled to take place in the fall of this year. Wendel Companies is providing landscape architectural consultation services to the MHRC. HHL Architects will continue as the restoration architect for the historic structures.

Following completion of the CLR this fall, construction work to rehabilitate the landscape could begin as early as spring 2015. While full funding to implement proposed treatments to the historic landscape is still being sought, significant initial support has been provided by an Environmental Protection Fund grant through the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation as well as a grant from the City of Buffalo. Rehabilitation of the landscape has also been supported with a generous gift from the estate of Norma Wiegley, a long time Martin House volunteer.

As part of the landscape historical documentation, the MHRC is seeking photographic images of the site that may exist in the community. Anyone who has historic photos of the exterior or interior of the Martin House Complex is encouraged to contact the MHRC and loan those images for documentation purposes.

### **ABOUT THE MARTIN HOUSE COMPLEX**

The Martin House Complex, designed and built from 1903-05, is considered by Wright scholars to be a significant turning point in the evolution of the Prairie house concept. The

original complex consisted of the main Martin House, pergola, conservatory and carriage house, the Barton House and a gardener's cottage, totaling nearly 32,000 square feet. Wright called the Martin House his "opus," and had its plans tacked above his drafting board for decades. Reconstruction of the pergola, conservatory and carriage house was completed in early 2007 in the most ambitious restoration of demolished Wright buildings ever undertaken.

The Martin House Restoration Corporation is a New York not-for-profit corporation founded in 1992. It has a 30-member board of directors and approximately 400 active volunteers. The historic Martin House site is open for tours year round. More information about this National Historic Landmark, including tour information, can be found at [www.darwinmartinhouse.org](http://www.darwinmartinhouse.org)