

## Boswell House

**William P. and Isabella Boswell House**  
**8805 Camargo Club Drive, Indian Hill, OH 45243**  
**Frank Lloyd Wright and Taliesin Associated Architects**  
**1957 - 1961**  
**Carport (originally designed by Wright in 1957), completed in 2001 by Taliesin Associated Architects**



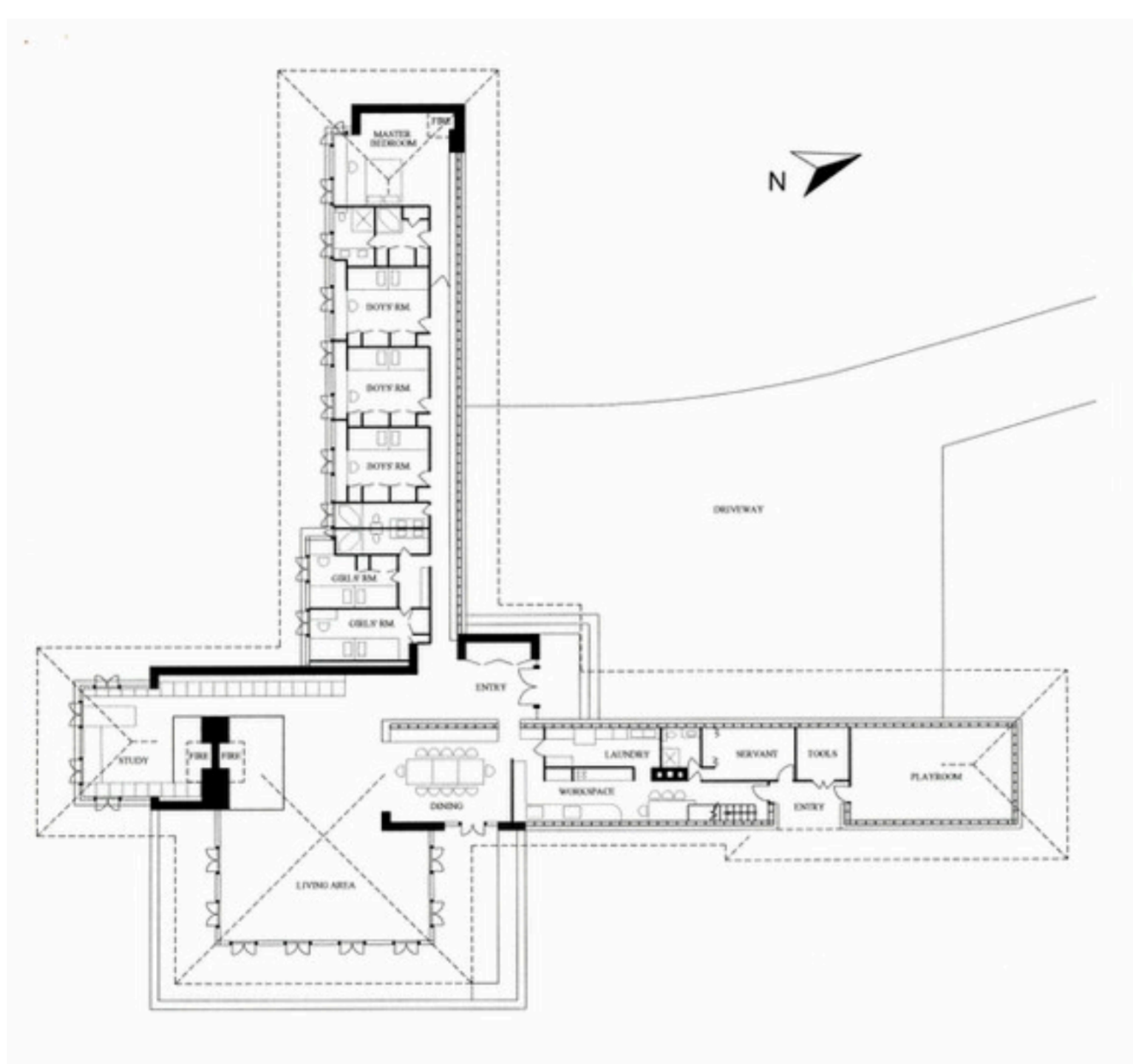
Boswell House, from the south-east. Photograph by Alice Weston, ca. 1990s. From the University of Cincinnati Digital Collections & Repositories @UC Libraries

The **Boswell House** is the largest, last, and least well known of Frank Lloyd Wright's three Cincinnati Houses. It is nestled between two low hills adjacent to Red Bird Hollow Nature Preserve and the Camargo Country Club in the exclusive Cincinnati suburb of Indian Hill. Begun in 1957, only two years before Wright's death, it was finished in 1961 by his successor firm, Taliesin Associated Architects. Taliesin Fellow William Wesley Peters supervised construction.



Boswell house (aerial view; north is up). Google Maps

William Pictou Boswell was president of the Boswell Oil Company, a national oil distribution firm. He and his wife Isabella had numerous children (Wright referred to them as the Boswells' "bustard of kids"), a fact that significantly influenced the size and program of the house. Wright did initial designs but had to keep revising them at the Boswells' behest; the end result is a 5,400 square foot house, one of Wright's larger residences of the 1950s and significantly bigger than his typical Usonian designs.



Boswell House floor plan (before addition of carport). Plan drawn by Patrick Snadon/Thomas Williams

The final plan is simple but effective. A large, squarish living area or great room, measuring about 30 by 40 feet, centers the composition; from that two wings extend, creating a giant L-plan. Entry is from the northern, uphill side of the site and the driveway curves down into a courtyard enclosed by the L-wings.



Boswell House, from north. Photograph by Alice Weston, ca. 1990s. From the University of Cincinnati Digital Collections & Repositories @UC Libraries

The house is of one story, with its entry in a higher vestibule that occupies the interior angle of the L. This entry space is tall but constricted in plan; one rounds a corner into the large living area, which has an open pyramidal roof, 16 feet high at its peak. Floor-length windows and doors surround it on three sides. These open onto outdoor terraces that envelop the living area, with dramatic, 270-degree views into the landscape.



Boswell House, exterior and interior views from blog 'Hooked on Houses' by Julia Sweeten (January 21, 2008)

The roofs of this central "living pavilion" partially overhang the upper, walled terraces and shade the interiors, while further earthen terraces step downhill into the landscape. Wright supposedly wanted the house to be of stone, but as built, its exterior is of reddish-brown brick while the low, hipped roofs are covered in red, terra-cotta tile. The floors of the main spaces are of terrazzo and flow onto the terraces, blending indoors and out.



Boswell House. Photograph by William Allin Storer. *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright: A Complete Catalog*. Univ. Chicago Press, 2002.

A vast chimney with fireplace occupies the south-west corner of the living area; beyond it on the south is a more private study-library with a second fireplace and its own surrounding terraces. Like the living area, the study has windows and doors on three sides. Opposite the study and adjacent to the entry is a dining area much larger than Wright's typical dining spaces. North of the dining room is the service wing, nearly 100 feet long. It contains a kitchen-workspace, a laundry, and a room for servants. Beyond this is a secondary entry and a tool storage room. The service wing terminates in a giant, 20 by 30-foot playroom—a strategic location that segregated the children's noise from the rest of the house.



Boswell House, view of entry courtyard, from the north-west. Photograph by Eugenio and Antonella Basan.

To the west is the bedroom wing, 100 feet long and containing five children's bedrooms with pairs of head-to-head beds in each room; two bedrooms accommodated four girls and three further bedrooms accommodated six boys. The girls' and boys' rooms are separated by back-to-back bedrooms. At the end of this wing is a master bedroom with its own bath suite and a fireplace within a brick wall on the west. The house has both radiant floor heating as well as forced-air heating and cooling systems.



Boswell House, from the south-east. Photograph by Mark Ostrowski, 2008. From the University of Cincinnati Digital Collections & Repositories @UC Libraries

William P. Boswell died in 1999 and the house was sold. In 2000-2001, second owners did interior work, including renovating the kitchen and converting one of the bedrooms into an additional bathroom and storage space. They also constructed an open carport that had been included in the original designs, but not built. The carport now adjoins the kitchen-service-playroom wing at right angles, creating a U-plan and surrounding the entry courtyard on three sides. Taliesin Associated Architects supervised this new construction. The Boswell House sold again in 2008, to its third owners.

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