each building and widen as they rise from ground floor level to create an illusion of upward spiraling ramps. This also creates narrower walkways on the upper floors, where there is less foot traffic, and allows light to fill the lower levels. Employees and visitors alike have the pleasure of looking inward to the planted, sky-lit malls, or outward to green trees and hills. Wright himself designed the beautiful landscaping for the atriums.

Each building abounds with detail. Take a closer look at the intricate grillwork, accents and appliqués that follow the “flow of pattern” carefully orchestrated by Wright.

Balconies extend along the outside of both buildings, and decorative arches create a sense of gentle rhythm. Inside, glass and panel partitions separate the walkways around the atrium from office spaces to produce an airy, spacious effect. The first and third floors feature imaginative art exhibits that contribute to the overall aesthetic harmony of the interior.

The central architectural focus for the building is the striking 80-foot diameter dome with its 172-foot, slender gold spire. The spire creates a dramatic, visual punctuation mark, breaking the horizontal plane of the two buildings. As another example of Wright's architectural genius, the spire was actually an exhaust outlet for the building’s furnace and was also designed as a radio tower, which has since been replaced by newer technology.

The four-story administration wing, completed in 1962, is 584 feet long, with office bays that are 26 feet wide on one side and 40 feet on the other. The structure houses the County's administrative, financial and community services departments, as well as the Marin County Library administration office, the Anne T. Kent California History Room, and the library's Civic Center branch. All office spaces in the administration wing have at least one source of natural light, either from outside windows or from skylights in the mall.

In these buildings, Wright first applied many features that are now considered commonplace, but during his day were ahead of their time. Notice how the atriums run down the center of each building and widen as they rise from ground floor level to create an illusion of upward spiraling ramps. This also creates narrower walkways on the upper floors, where there is less foot traffic, and allows light to fill the lower levels. Employees and visitors alike have the pleasure of looking inward to the planted, sky-lit malls, or outward to green trees and hills. Wright himself designed the beautiful landscaping for the atriums.

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Note the Civic Center’s circular theme used throughout the lobby.

The circular courtrooms represented the first break with traditional courtroom design in more than 100 years, and have been copied elsewhere in this country and abroad. Spectators sit in curved rows and curved tables serve the attorneys and their clients. A lectern in the middle of the well permits the judge and jurors a clear view of the witnesses and attorneys.

You may enter a courtroom quietly to view the proceedings.

Continue your tour by taking the elevator up to the first floor and turn left through the Art Gallery and the glass doors.

The Marin Center complex is located on Civic Center Drive and Avenue of the Flags. These buildings are only open during events.

The Marin Arts Council designs art exhibits for this lobby. The Marin Center complex features the 2000-seat Marin Veterans’ Memorial Auditorium, the 22,500 square foot Exhibit Hall, 300-seat Showcase Theater, and the 80-acre fairgrounds. Marin Center hosts an active year-round calendar of performing arts, lectures, musical theater, films, recitals, conferences and festivals. It’s also site of the annual Marin County Fair over the Fourth of July weekend, which has become a favorite Bay Area family tradition.

The buildings were designed after Frank Lloyd Wright’s death by Taliesin architects.

“...We know that the good building is not the one that hurts the landscape, but is one that makes the landscape more beautiful than it was before that building was built. In Marin County you have one of the most beautiful landscapes I have seen, and I am proud to make the buildings of this County characteristic of the beauty of the County.”

Today, and for generations to come, everyone who passes through this remarkable architectural wonder is grateful to Frank Lloyd Wright for his breathtaking vision and inspired gift to Marin County.

We hope you have enjoyed your time at the Marin County Civic Center. Docent-led tours are available every Friday at 10:30 a.m., leaving from the Civic Center Cafe. Rm. 233. Cost is $12 per person. Advance tickets are required. Groups of 10 or more may arrange a private docent tour by calling the Visitor Services Office at 415.473.3762.

Thank you for taking our tour and we look forward to seeing you again!

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For more information, visit www.marincenter.org.

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