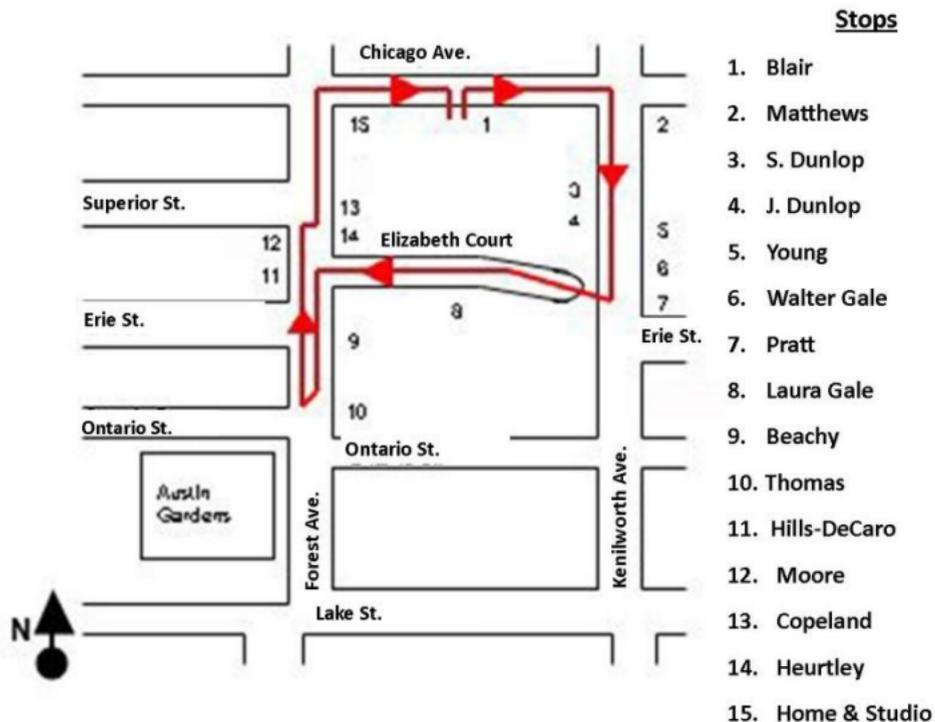


Forest Avenue  
Walking Tour

## Frank Lloyd Wright Historic Neighborhood Walking Tour



## Introduction: Gather in the Courtyard

- Lake Street was an old Indian trail from Lake Michigan to Elgin (Fox River).
- Oak Park formed in the 1870s and grew rapidly after the Chicago fire of 1871.
- Country living was growing in popularity.
- Some houses built on spec, grander ones by architects. Many built by contractors from pattern books.
- Remind guests they are in a residential neighborhood.
  - No walking on lawns
  - Let people pass on sidewalks

COLLECT TICKETS!



Walk to Chicago Avenue and face Anna's House.

## Stop 1: John Blair (Anna's) House

Architect: Unknown

- Affectionately called “Anna’s house” by staff & volunteers, the building serves as offices space.
- Was on the property when FLW purchased it in 1888.
- One of the oldest homes in OP, probably late 1860’s.
- Became home for FLW’s mother and sisters – he also lived there while his home was under construction.
- Note intersecting gables and complex roof line, stone foundation, bay windows – all Victorian characteristics.



Walk east on Chicago to Kenilworth and turn right. Do not cross the street.

## Stop 2: Charles E. Matthews House (1909)

Architects: Tallmadge & Watson

- Built at the height of Wright's Prairie period
- Flat stucco panes, art glass, wood trim – abstractions of the Prairie Style
- Gable frames one and one-half story entry – a T&W trademark
- Interior retains a colonial-style closed floor plan
- Considered one of T&W's finest designs



Continue south on Kenilworth to Stop 3.

### Stop 3: Simpson Dunlop House (1896)

Architect: E.E. Roberts

- Built shortly after Wright's home and his playroom addition (1889, 1895)
- E.E. Roberts headed the largest architectural practice in Oak Park.
- Queen Anne characteristics: large wrap-around porch, asymmetrical design, gables and bays
- Simplified Queen Ann style with the use of crisp geometric lines – Roberts was experimenting with the change going on in Oak Park
- This house is situated on a full acre.



Walk south to the house next door.

#### Stop 4: Joseph Dunlop House (c. 1897)

Architect: E.E. Roberts

- Client was Simpson Dunlop's brother, Joseph.
- Joseph Kettlestrings Dunlop was a local banker and realtor.
- Notice the Queen Anne features we saw next door – porch, bays, and gables.
- This home also features a few abstractions from the Prairie Style with the:
  - Strong horizontal lines on the façade
  - Broad sheltering eaves
  - Horizontal window arrangement on the third level
- House suffered fire damage in 1980's and it was renovated at the time. The interior now embodies an Arts and Crafts interior.



Continue south on Kenilworth to view Stop 5.

Stop 5: Harrison P. Young House (1870's)  
Remodeled by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1895

- Originally there was an older farmhouse in the back portion of the lot.
- In 1895 Wright moved the farmhouse back 16 feet and designed the front 2/3 of the house.
- Wright incorporated geometric forms in this house:
  - Cube structure at core
  - Octagonal bay at south end
  - Steep roof gables at right angles
- Slightly stubby “wings” of the porch create a crossbeam effect, which results in what looks like the beginnings of a cantilever on the north end of the house.
- The corner piers have a Sullivanesque design. You can see the organic forms that Sullivan often used in his designs.



- Note the broad brick chimney.
- And notice the concealed stairway, creating a hidden entrance.



Continue walking south on Kenilworth Avenue to Stop 6.  
You will look at Stop 6 and 7 from across the street.  
Stand in a spot where you can see both homes.

## Stop 6: George Pratt House (ca. 1886)

Architect: Unknown

- This house pre-dates Wright's home.
- It is a stick style house with:
  - A vertical emphasis
  - Varied shapes of decorative shingles
  - Shingles and siding are laid in different directions, creating an interesting texture and pattern
- The walls are divided into sections which reflect the inner balloon-frame structure – like the house is inside out.
- The porch was added around 1890 when the house was brought here from elsewhere in Oak Park.
- This house was probably built from a carpenter's pattern book.



- Reverend George Pratt was the pastor of Grace Episcopal, which is one of the oldest congregations in Oak Park.



You can stand in the same spot to look at Stop 7.

## Stop 7: Walter Gale House (1905)

Architects: Handy & Cady



- This house was built at the height of Wright's Prairie period, but is dramatically different than a Prairie home.
- This house is a Colonial Revival. It has a sense of formality and refinement.
- The interior floor plan is reflected in the exterior symmetry.
- Note the classical details and their symmetry:
  - Pediment
  - Columns
  - Pilasters
  - Dentil molding
- Next we will see a mature Prairie Style house – think about the contrasts.



Walk to Elizabeth Court, walk west on the south side of the street to Stop 8.

## Stop 8: Laura Gale Residence (1909)

Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright

- The windows are banded together to form light screens.
- Contrast the balconies here to the Queen Anne porches we saw.
- Here the balconies are an integral part of the structure.
- The balcony walls create privacy for the homeowner and they help unify the house with its environment.
- The cantilevered balconies also protect the windows from the elements, creating a sense of shelter in the interior, but at the same time they open the interior to the outside.
- Plaster covers the brick chimney to integrate the overall design. Note the fact that it is also in the center of the house.



- Abstract geometric shapes in the exterior such as you see here anticipated modern European architecture of 1920's.
- Wright uses simple exterior materials. The buff plaster and brown trim are the original colors.
- Plaster and wood were Prairie Style materials.
- There is a secluded entrance.
- There is an open plan on the first floor with a Roman brick fireplace and the second floor has five bedrooms.
- This was completed shortly before Robie House which was completed in 1910.
- Try to mentally compare this house with Fallingwater which was created in 1936.



Continue west on Elizabeth Court to Forest Avenue.  
Turn left onto Forest Avenue and stand at Stop 9.

Stop 9: Peter A. Beachy Residence  
Remodeled by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1906

- The Prairie Style structure that you see here absorbs the earlier house that was on site.
- Original construction costs were around \$6000.
- Barry Byrne from Wright's studio executed the working drawings and supervised the construction.
- The lot is 133 by 330 feet – more than one acre.
- House sits on the N.W. corner of the lot in order to maximize its southern exposure.
- There is stress on the horizontal with some vertical accents.
- The seven gables break up the dominant horizontal line.
- There is also an expansive chimney.



- The picture window was unusual for Wright houses of this period and there is no art glass, which is also unusual.
- Wright also uses an odd combination of exterior materials:
  - Brick
  - Stucco
  - Wood
  - Cement
- There is a hidden entry behind the northwest pier.
- The covered veranda on the south extends the dining room to light and air.
- The roof shape shows Wright's Japanese influence.
- In 1946 this house was converted to a 2-family residence and then back to a single family residence in 1977. Finally it was fully restored from 1990 to 1992.



Continue south on Forest Avenue and cross the street to view Stop 10.

## Stop 10: Frank Thomas Residence (1901)

Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright

- This was the first Prairie house built by Wright in Oak Park.
- The original cost of this house was about \$10,000.
- It was a wedding gift from James C. Rogers to his daughter Mary on her marriage to Frank Wright Thomas (no relation).
- Wright did not want to overwhelm the small lot.
- He used an L-shape and oriented the house away from the Victorian row houses to the south. There are also fewer windows on the south as well.
- Note the Prairie Style elements:
  - Horizontal accent with the trim
  - Hipped roofline
  - Banded ribbon windows



- The windows act as light screens. They have a geometric pattern as opposed to the Victorian style stained glass.



Walk north on the west side of Forest Avenue until you reach Stop II.

Stop 11: Hills-DeCaro Residence (ca. 1883)  
Remodeling designed 1900 and executed in 1906  
Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright (remodel)

- Nathan Moore, who lived in the large house to the north, commissioned Wright to reconstruct an existing house on this lot for his daughter.
- The original house was rotated 90 degrees so the front door originally faced the Nathan Moore House.
- The original house was a traditional Stick style balloon-frame structure.
- This was an early Wright design, so it is not a fully realized Prairie Style house.
- We can see the Japanese influence in the roofs.
- There is a central chimney that the roofs are arranged around.
- The original wood siding was resurfaced with stucco and wood trim.



- The eaves were extended and the water table was added around the base of the home.
- The interior was remodeled on a more open plan.
- Wright grouped windows at the front of the house.
- The second level burned in 1976, so the DeCaro family rebuilt it according to original plans.
- The ticket booth to the north of the house is from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition.



Turn to the right to look at the south face of the Nathan G. Moore House.

## Stop 12: Nathan G. Moore Residence (1895, rebuilt 1923)

Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright

- Built in 1895 as a traditional English Tudor for Nathan Moore, who did not want to shock his neighbors.
- Legend has it that Wright accepted this commission to raise funds for the playroom addition on his own house done in 1895.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> story of this home burned on Christmas Day in 1922.
- Wright returned to rebuild the residence in 1923, so this is the most recent Wright house on the tour.
- In the reconstruction, Wright extended the roof downward 10 feet and added the cantilevered porch and a concrete water table.
- Cast concrete balls in fences have Sullivanesque motifs.





Walk to the corner and cross the street to see the north side of the house.

- Geometric trim integrates windows into the scheme of the gables.
- Note the massive chimneys include cast ornamentation.
- The house sits on the north edge of the lot and opens to the south side for gardens.



Now turn around and look at the Copeland House (Stop 13).

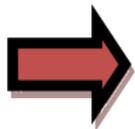
### Stop 13: William Copeland Residence (Remodeled 1909)

Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright

- The Copeland family commissioned FLW to remodel their home and their garage.
- The resulting structure was not executed entirely in line with Wright's drawings.
- Prairie elements:
  - Hipped roof
  - Banded dormer windows
  - Large overhanging eaves
- The house's original Ionic columns were changed to simpler Doric columns.



- Wright remodeled the garage and turned it into a coach house in 1908.



Walk about 25 steps to south on Forest Avenue to get a better view of the Heurtley Residence (Stop 14).

Stop 14: Arthur and Grace Heurtley Residence (1902)  
Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright

- Arthur Heurtley was secretary of Northern Trust Bank.
- The second owners of this home were FLW's sister, Jane and her husband Andrew Porter.
- Fully developed Prairie Style structure that incorporates almost all elements of the style.
- Everything is contained within the rectangle created by the large hipped roof.
- Massiveness results from:
  - Large sheltering roof
  - Broad central chimney
  - Horizontal lines in brickwork and windows
  - Elimination of vertical line (no downspouts)



- Every third row of bricks projects and is lighter in color.
- The vertical mortar is tinted the same color as the brick, further emphasizing the horizontality of the house.
- The brick wall in the front and to the south extends the building.
- Horizontal bands of art glass windows form light screens.
- Interesting combination of solids and voids
- During the daytime the brick is prevalent, but at night the lighted windows create the illusion that the roof is floating and the brick recedes into the darkness.
- The house has no excavated basement – it is built on a large concrete slab.
- Interior was restored to its 1902 condition in 1998.



Walk north on Forest Avenue to the front of the Home & Studio.

Stop 15: Frank Lloyd Wright Home & Studio (1889, 1898)

Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright



Continue north and pause in front of Wright's home to point out low wide gable, banded windows, Chicago common brick, how it sits deep on the lot, natural materials and colors.



Bring the group back to the H&S courtyard. Thank them and encourage them to stay connected to the FLWPT by seeing the RH, Rookery, visiting our museum shop, volunteering or membership.