

Home and Studio - What's Wright?

What's Wright is organized according to the core tour route, on a room-by-room basis. This will provide you with restoration information to answer specific questions and may be used as supplemental material for your tour.

ENTRY

Art Glass

- Bay windows—all original glass—new lead comes.
- Door and stair windows—new glass and lead comes.

Ceiling and Wall Treatments

- Ceiling—original plaster beams and dentil moldings.
- Walls—sand-finish skim coat of plaster over original plaster to re-create original plaster texture.

Floor

- Original oak floor—hand stripped and varnished.
- Floor grille is of the period to match a single original floor grille in the home.

Frieze

- Plaster frieze is original to the building. It is a period reproduction of the Altar of Zeus (ca. 180 B.C.) from Pergamon (in modern day Turkey). It is composed of five modular panels, repeated. At the time Wright lived in the house, it could be ordered by mail from a firm manufacturing plaster casts of Classical and Renaissance sculpture.

Front Door

- Restoration of 1909 design. Door is of quarter-sawn oak; doorknob of the period to match other home doorknobs.

Plaster Cast Sculpture

- A period plaster cast sculpture of the Venus de Milo (ca. 150 B.C.) is located on the stair. William Drummond also owned this plaster cast, which was similar in size to the one owned by Wright.

LIVING ROOM

Art Glass

- West bay—original glass, new lead comes.

- North bay—two center windows are original glass, new lead comes—two side windows are new glass and lead comes.

Bay

- West bay original; north bay rebuilt per historic photographs.

Ceiling and Wall Treatment

- Ceiling—original plaster beams and dentil course. Ceiling panels have been re-plastered.
- Walls—skim coat over original plaster to re-create original sand finish.
- Plaster corner panels—one (southwest corner) is original; three are new casts from original.
- Panel is a variation from the Auditorium Building lobby by Louis Sullivan.

Fireplace Ingleenook

- Fireplace, mantel, hearth, and seats all original.
- Mirror not original.

Floor

- Original oak floor—hand stripped and varnished.
- Floor grille of the period matches original example in the home.

Furniture

- Built-in window seats and cabinets were reconstructed according to historic photos with new quarter-sawn oak stained to match the original woodwork.
- The carved wooden chest and carved square table were not designed by Wright but are original to the home.
- Armchairs designed by Wright (ca. 1893) are original to the home. The upholstery is not original.
- One of two tables designed by Wright for the Home and Studio (ca. 1904?) to display Japanese prints; table is made of poplar.
- The small birch proportioned side chair (ca. 1907) designed by Wright is similar to the Coonley Residence dressing room chair also made of birch.

Hardware

- Mostly original.

Lighting

- Re-creations of 1909 fixtures.

Fine Art

- Landscape painting (south wall) is by William Wendt. The frame of gilded oak was designed by Wright.
- Pastel (north wall) of wheat fields is by Charles Corwin. The frame is a reproduction of the one shown in a historic photo.
- Framed Japanese woodblock print (east wall) is by Hiroshige, The Ferry Boat at Rokugo Near Kawasaki, 1833. (From the Series: 53 Stations of the Tokaido Road.)

Portieres

- Curtains between rooms
- Green cotton velvet per historic photos.

Wood

- Most of the wood trim is original.
- Inglenook is all original wood.

NOTE: The Wright family had palm trees in the room.

STUDY

Art Glass

- All-new glass and lead comes.

Ceiling and Wall Treatment

- Original cove molding (except north wall).
- Walls skim-coated to re-create original sand finish.

Fine Art

- Lithograph Thawing Ice (ca. 1890) by Norwegian artist Fritz Thaulow is original to the home.

Wood

- Oak trim is mostly original.

PASSAGEWAY

Ceiling and Wall Treatment

- New plaster.

Floor

- New magnesite floor

Lighting

- Restored 1909 light fixtures.
- Fixtures would have used carbon filament bulbs (equal to 15 watt light bulb today).

Stair

- Stairway to the balcony was re-created using historic photos.

Wood

- Trim—new basswood; stained and varnished.
- Steps - oak

PANTRY

Ceiling and Wall Treatment

- Ceiling re-plastered.
- Walls skim-coated to match the original texture.

Floor

- Original maple, stripped and refinished.

Furniture

- West cabinets are original; hardware of the period matches examples in the home.

- North cabinets—non-original; made to match original pantry cabinets. Based on original Wright plans of 1889.

Lighting

- Re-creation of 1909 fixtures.

Radiator

- Thought to be original.

Sink

- Believed to be original to the 1889 kitchen (now 1895 dining room).

Wood

- Trim mostly original.

China

- White Limoges with gold trim, which was purchased from Marshall Field & Company, was the family's good china.
- Blue Willow pattern, manufactured by the Buffalo Pottery Company (a subsidiary of the Larkin Company), was the family's everyday china. These period pieces are similar to those owned by the Wright family.

1895 DINING ROOM

Art Glass

- All original glass and some original lead comes.
- Design from German art glass manual.

Ceiling and Wall Treatment

- 1909 plaster ceiling and walls, skim-coated and covered with dyed painter's linen canvas, which duplicates the original wall covering.

Fireplace

- All original terra cotta tiles and quarter-sawn oak.
- While the original purpose of the indentations of the fireplace is unknown, they may have been for later lighting fixtures.

Floor

- Fifty percent original terra cotta hearth tiles (orange color) and fifty percent new terra cotta tiles (red), cut to same size as the originals; original pattern re-laid in “mud-bed” installation.

Furniture

- The table is quarter-sawn oak, one of three tables designed by Wright and used in the room at various times. The table was designed with two leaves to extend the length of the table to accommodate more diners. Wood grain in leaves runs perpendicular to wood grain of table to form a decorative border.
- The eight chairs are original to the 1895 room. (The two darker chairs are on long-term loan from Taliesin West, the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation in Scottsdale, Arizona). Wright originally designed the chairs with turned spindles. Sometime after 1904, Wright modified the chairs to have square spindles.
- Built-in buffet ledges are mostly original.
- Wright designed the high chair for his youngest son Llewellyn around 1903.
- Dining room chair (ca. 1910) designed by Wright for the Robie House is on loan from the Smart Museum of Art.
- Ceramics and other decorative objects are similar to those seen in historic photos.

Hardware

- Mostly original. Throw bolts are reproductions.

Lighting

- Lighting grille is a reproduction of the original based on historic photos and remnants of wood frame.
- Grilles are of quarter-inch oak plywood—original was probably a veneer.
- Original diffuser was Japanese rice paper; it is now fiberglass.

Wood

- Mostly original—quarter-sawn oak, refinished (stained and varnished).

SECOND FLOOR HALL

Fine Art

- Pastel of Catherine, the six children, and a neighborhood child painted by Maginel Wright Barney (ca. 1905).

Wood

- Handrail is not original feature, designed in a Wright style and based upon the same railing treatment used in the 1911 remodeling of the car entrance stairs.
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CHILDREN'S DORMITORY (WEST BEDROOM)

Art Glass

- Original glass, new lead comes.

Ceiling and Wall Treatment

- Skim-coated to re-create original texture.

Floor

- Original oak.

Furniture

- Closets, a re-creation of original cabinets based on historic photos, are made of quarter-sawn oak.
- Bed in girls' room was designed by Wright (ca. 1911) and used in the home.
- Chest of drawers in girls' room may have been designed by Wright for the Coonley Residence (ca. 1907).
- Table in boys' room was designed by Wright for Mori Oriental Art Store (ca. 1914, on loan).
- Straight back chair in boys' room was designed by Wright (ca. 1911) for his conversion of the studio office to a dining room for Catherine and the children.
- Variant of Wright's slant back chair is not original to the home.

Lighting

- Brass wall sconces are re-creations of original fixtures based on historic photos and measurements of an existing fixture.

Wood

- Trim mostly original except for dividing wall.

Floor Grilles

- Of the period to match existing grille in home.

MASTER BEDROOM (NORTH BEDROOM)

Art Glass

- Original glass and zinc comes.

Ceiling and Wall Treatment

- Re-plastered to re-create original sand finish.

Stencil

- Re-creation from historic photos based on faint remains found under eight coats of paint. Checked by paint analysis; used metallic gold on new plaster.

Floor

- Original basswood, stained.
- Floor grille of the period to match original example in home.

Furniture

- Bed made of birch is a re-creation based on historic photographs of original bed in the room.
- Chest of drawers (ca. 1907) was designed by Wright for the Coonley Residence.

Lighting

- Pendant fixtures—re-creation of original fixtures based on historic photos, with brass clock chains and new hand-blown globes.
- Ceiling medallions are of plaster painted gold. New casts were based on an original found inside a wall.

Murals

- Original was uncovered under eight coats of paint and restored; plaster was re-laminated after major separation of original coat.

Wood

- Original birch trim.
- Floor is basswood, which is only used in this bedroom.

BATHROOM

Ceiling and Wall Treatment

- Ceiling and upper walls re-plastered; painter's linen installed on upper walls.
- Walls were rebuilt with new oak board and battens based on historic photos.

Floor

- New maple floor—re-creation of original.
- Floor grille of the period to match existing example in home.

Fixtures

- Tub, sink, and toilet tank were architectural salvage purchases of the period.
- All exposed pipes and fittings from the plumbing contractor have been re-plated with nickel.
- Toilet is original, from the basement of the home.

Lighting

- Re-creation of original fixtures.

CATHERINE'S DAYROOM (SOUTH BEDROOM)

Art Glass

- Bay windows—new glass and lead comes, design based on historic photo.
- Clerestory window—original glass and comes.

Ceiling and Wall Treatment

- New fabric over new plaster.
- Fabric color and texture based on sample found under wood trim.

Floor

- Original to 1895 addition—fir, lightly hand-sanded and varnished; marks were caused by swinging beds out to make them up.
- Original floor grille is the only one left in the home.

Furniture

- Built-in furniture (wardrobe cabinets and radiator cabinet) were re-created/restored based on historic photographs.
- Crib (ca. 1850) was used by over 40 Tobin family children, including Catherine Tobin Wright and all six of Wright's children.
- Knit blanket of yarn and ribbon, knitted by volunteer Eleanor Trenary in 2009, based upon a ca. 1900 pattern.
- Rocker (1910) was designed by Wright and George Niedecken for the Robie House. Used in the Robie House living room, it is on loan from the Smart Museum of Art.
- Sewing machine is typical of the period.
- Dining room chair (1900) was designed by Wright for the Bradley House, Kankakee, Illinois.
- The chest of drawers is a period piece.

Lighting

- Wall sconces are re-creations of an original based on historic plans and measurements of existing fixture.

Radiator Cabinets

- Re-created based on historic photos.

Wood

- Mostly original quarter-sawn oak.

CHILDREN'S PLAYROOM

Art Glass

- Bay windows—mostly original glass, with new brass-plated zinc comes.
- Upper windows—original glass and zinc comes.
- Bookcases—new glass and zinc comes in front doors of cases. Original glass and zinc comes in north and south doors of bookcases.

Plaster Cast Sculpture

- A modern cast made from a period plaster cast model of a bust of Venus de Milo is installed on the fireplace mantel. The original Venus de Milo is a classical sculpture dating from ca. 150 B.C.
- A period plaster cast sculpture of the Nike of Samothrace is installed on the playroom balcony. The original Nike of Samothrace is a classical sculpture dating from ca. 190 B.C. Both the original Venus de Milo and the Nike of Samothrace can be seen at the Louvre Museum, Paris, France.

Floor

- Original oak, hand-stripped, stained, and varnished.
- Floor grilles of the period to match original example in home.

Furniture

- Piano is a Steinway baby grand, which was in FLW's son David Wright's family for over 85 years and was donated to the H&S in 2011.
- Piano player (Cecilian) is a period piece, the same type as the original in the home.
- Two small armchairs (ca. 1914) designed by Wright for the Mori Oriental Art Store, on loan.
- Large armchair (ca. 1907) was designed by Wright for the Coonley Residence.
- Toys are typical of the period.
- Andirons are an original Wright design.

Skylight Grilles

- New curved reproductions in oak veneer plywood were reproduced from historic photo.

Lighting

- Mostly original glass, with original zinc comes and oak supports.

Wood Trim

- Mostly original; only window benches for toy storage are new.

Mural

- Original was never painted over.

- Mural has been cleaned and plaster patched. Damaged sections were painted over at joints.
- The mural, originally thought to have been painted by Orlando Giannini, depicts *The Fisherman and the Genie* from *The Arabian Nights*. Corwin and Wright are thought to have collaborated on the design of the mural. Later research shows that the mural was painted by Charles Corwin.

KITCHEN

Cabinets

- Reproductions, with architectural salvage hardware.
- Drain board counters are maple.

Ceiling and Wall Treatment

- New plaster to re-create original texture

Floor

- Replaced at some point—the only original section remaining can be seen in the hall to the kitchen near the pantry.
- Maple floor, sanded and varnished.

Furniture

- Stove is a period piece salvaged from another property, based on recollections of David Wright. It burns coal or wood and has a gas burner attachment.
- Sink is a period piece.
- Table, chair, dishes, cookware, and utensils are of the period.

Icebox

- Located in the hallway—the salvage oak icebox is typical of the period.

Lighting Fixtures

- Period fixtures.

Wood

- Trim—pine, stained and varnished.

DRAFTING ROOM

Art Glass

- All windows are new and have new copper-plated zinc comes.
- Some glass is original.
- Some hardware is original while some is architectural salvage of the period and similar to the original.

Ceiling and Wall Treatment

- All new plaster except for the ceiling of the balcony

Fireplace

- Restored—face was rebuilt using old Chicago common brick of the period.
- The frieze above the fireplace was designed by Wright for the Isidor Heller Residence (1896) in Hyde Park. Richard Bock was the sculptor. Re-cast based upon molds taken from the Heller House in the 1990s.

Floor

- New magnesite floor (see description in “Magnesite” in — Additional Resources).

Plaster Cast Sculpture

- The period plaster cast bust of the Pysche of Naples in its original finish was installed near the Rudyard Kipling quote in the front of the balcony. The original sculpture dates from the 4th century B.C. and is located in the National Museum, Naples, Italy.

Furniture

- Drafting tables are reproductions of the originals, based on historic photographs. The tops are maple and the bases are oak.
- Drafting stools are reproductions and made of oak. An existing stool from Taliesin was used as the original model for the reproduction stools.
- Wright designed the large library table made of oak for the Francis Little Residence (1902) in Peoria, Illinois. It is similar in size to a table that was used in the drafting room.

Weed Holder

- Wright designed the original “weed holder” (ca. 1895) that is installed in a display case on the desk. According to historic photographs, there were two weed holders in the Oak Park Home and Studio while Wright was in residence. Wright provided this tall vessel, designed to hold and display dried flowers and plants, to a number of his clients for whom Wright

designed early Prairie-style homes. Wright contracted with the James A. Miller Bros. Company to manufacture the weed holder and a copper urn. The weed holder is made of hammered copper with an applied patina finish, which results in its dark color.

Copper Urn

- One of 12 known urns, this was the older of 2 designs - the older pattern was originally created for the Edward C. Waller House in River Forest in 1899 and also appears in photos of the Home and Studio ca. 1898/99. This urn was originally owned by Charles E. Roberts, for whom Wright remodeled his Burnham & Root-designed home in 1896. It was acquired in 2004 from Robert's descendants and restored and conserved in 2008. Date unknown, but probably ca. 1900. Formed copper with a leathery finish, made by the James A. Miller and Brother Company, who were otherwise known for copper skylights and gutters.

Lighting

- Holophane globes are close reproductions of the originals; the connection at the ceiling is original hardware.
- Green glass shades are reproductions.
- Bulbs are low-wattage, clear glass bulbs similar to the originals.

Vault Door

- Is of the period, similar to the original, salvaged.

Wood

- Trim and cabinet work are stained basswood; approximately 50 percent of the trim is original.

OFFICE

Art Glass

- Lay light and windows were reproduced from original designs.

Ceiling and Wall Treatment

- New plaster re-create original texture, paint and color.

Floor

- New magnesite floor (see description in “Magnesite” — Additional Resources)

Plaster Cast Sculpture

- The modern cast was made from a period plaster cast model of Boys Singing From a Book by Luca Della Robbia; it is part of a ten-panel frieze (relief sculpture) of boys and girls singing and playing instruments. The original sculpture (ca. 1450) is located in the Cathedral Museum, Florence, Italy.

Furniture

- Desk, file cabinet, and chairs are reproductions based on historic photographs and measurements and are made from stained poplar.
- Office equipment is typical of the period.

Lighting

- Reproductions of original.

RECEPTION HALL

Art Glass

- Skylights are of original glass and brass-plated comes.

Ceiling and Wall Treatment

- New plaster re-creates the original sand finish.
- Painted metallic bronze (1909 color).

Floor

- New magnesite floor (see description in “Magnesite”— Additional Resources).

Furniture

- Plan table and chairs are reproductions based on historic photographs and measurements of existing chairs from another Wright site. They are made of stained poplar.

Lighting

- Both incandescent fixtures and daylight (from the skylight) can be used to light a lay light, depending on exterior light levels.

Stork Columns

- Generally, inside row consists of original plaster casts that have been repaired and

repainted. Outside row consists of new plaster casts made from an original panel and painted. Eleven of the 32 panels are restored originals. The rest (21) are reproductions.

LIBRARY

Art Glass

- Windows are mostly original glass.
- New zinc comes are brass-plated.
- Bookcase doors—two are original glass with brass-plated comes and two are reproductions.

Ceiling and Wall Treatment

- Ceiling—original plaster.
- Walls—new plaster re-creating original sand finish texture.
- Paint—historic metallic bronze (1909 color).

Fireplace

- Flues—only the east side has a flue, the other side is solid.
- Fireplace size is a restoration based on historic plans and physical evidence.
- Chicago common brick—some original.
- New limestone lintel; reproduced to match original.

Floor

- New Magnesite floor (see description in “Magnesite” — Additional Resources).

Furniture

- Quarter-sawn oak table designed by Wright (ca. 1901) was acquired with the purchase of the Home and Studio. It is similar in design to the Fricke Residence table, which is on display at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, England. Note the octagonal legs on the table.
- Chairs are reproductions based on historic photographs and measurements of existing chairs from another Wright site. They are made of stained poplar.

Lighting

- Restoration of original fixtures based on historic photos.

Wood

- Trim and cabinetwork--new and reused basswood, stained.
- Trim is 50 percent original.
- Cabinets — one is a original and the rest are re-creations.
- Window “decks”—re-creations based on historic photos.
- Swinging display boards (cork) are reproductions.

Wright Buildings in Oak Park (24)		Wright Buildings in Oak Park (cont'd)	
<i>Year</i>	<i>Building</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Building</i>
1889	Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio	1903	Edwin H. Cheney House
1892	Thomas H. Gale House ("Bootleg")	1906	Peter A. Beachy House
1892	Robert P. Parker House ("Bootleg")	1906	Edward R. Hills (DeCaro) House
1893	Walter M. Gale House	1905	Unity Temple
1893	Francis J. Wooley House	1908	William H. Copeland House
1895	Nathan G. Moore House	1909	Laura (Mrs. Thomas) Gale House
1895	Harrison P. Young House	1911	Oscar B. Balch House
1896	Harry C. Goodrich House Remodeling	1913	Harry S. Adams House
1896	Charles E. Roberts House	Wright Buildings in River Forest (7)	
1896	George W. Smith House	1894	William Herman Winslow House
1897	George Furbeck House	1895	Chauncey L. Williams House
1898	Rollin Furbeck House	1901	E. Arthur Davenport House
1901	William G. Fricke House	1906	River Forest Tennis Club
1901	Frank W. Thomas House	1908	Isabel Roberts House
1902	Arthur Heurtley House	1909	J. Kibben Ingalls House
1903	William E. Martin House	1911	Walter Gerts House Remodeling

Money: Wright borrowed \$5,000 from his employer, the architect Louis Sullivan, to buy the land and build the house. In his autobiography, Wright stated that he went \$1,200 over his budget. Wright sold the house for \$33,500 in 1925.

Square Feet:

US METRIC

1889 Home: 2,163 sq. ft. 196 m

1909 Home: 3,581 sq. ft. 326 m

1909 Studio: 2,596 sq. ft. 236 m

1909 Total: 6,177 sq. ft. 562 m

Lot Size: 88.3 x 205 sq. ft. 26.5 m x 61.5 m

Wood: The primary wood used in the home was quarter-sawn red oak. The primary wood used in the studio was basswood.

Highs and Lows:

Ceiling in playroom: 15 feet 4.5 m

Ceiling in the drafting room: 23 feet 6.9 m

Door between home study and passageway to drafting room: 73" 1.83 m

Technology: Electricity was installed circa 1891. There is no evidence that the building was ever piped for gas lighting. There were two telephones: one in the second floor hall of the home and one in the studio office.

Plumbing and Heating: There were two heating systems: a hot air coal furnace and steam heat with concealed radiators. Floor grates were not designed by Wright. The stove is salvage of the period. It could burn either coal or wood and had a gas attachment. The icebox is also salvage of the period. In the bathroom, the sink, tub, and tank are all salvage. The toilet is original.

Studio Flooring: The floor is made of magnesite, a mixed and poured composition with a trowel finish. It contains magnesium oxichloric cement and sawdust with a colorant powder. Magnesite was a new type of flooring, which had been developed in Europe and was used by Wright in a number of his commissions, including Robie.

Art Glass: Progresses from pure geometry (diamond-paned windows on front of house) to stylized natural forms (lotus blossoms in dining room and tulips in playroom) back to pure geometry (glass in studio). Some glass is original. Some camees are original. The camees are made of lead, zinc, or are brass coated depending on the room.

Dishes: The gold and white Limoges china was the Wright's good china and was probably purchased from Marshall Fields. The Blue Willow ware was the family's everyday dishes. It is similar to the sort produced by the Buffalo Pottery Company and to the type that was distributed by the Larkin Company as a premium with its soap.

Timepieces and Mirrors: None of the historic photos in our collection show any clocks or mirrors in the Home and Studio, so there are none on display.

Sayings: "Truth is Life" is a variation of Wright's mother's family motto: "Truth against the World". This motto is in the living room. "Ye've left a glimmer still to cheer / the man – the artifex! / That holds in spite o'knocks and scale / o'friction, waste an slip / and by that light

– now mark my word / We'll build the perfect ship” This is a quotation from Rudyard Kipling’s “McAndrew’s Hymn” and is displayed in the drafting room.

Stork Column: Designed by Wright with input from his draftsperson Marion Mahoney and sculpted by Richard Bock. The symbols are the tree of life, the book of knowledge, an architect’s plan, and two storks meant to represent wisdom and fertility. There are thirty-two panels, eleven of which are restored originals. Other unrestored originals are stored as part of the restoration documentation collection.

Commissions from Oak Park Studio: Wright completed approximately 125 buildings, a quarter of his life’s work. Important designs include Unity Temple, Robie House, and The Larkin Building.

Transportation: Frank Lloyd Wright had a Stoddard-Dayton roadster with a rumble seat. He also had a black horse called Kono. His elder sons had horses named Kit and Gypsy. The younger children had a pony cart, which was pulled by Merry Legs.

Noteworthy Trees: The tree growing in the passageway was originally a willow. During restoration a honey locust tree replaced the willow, which had died. The two trunks in the house have atrophied, and the third trunk, which was outside, has been removed to keep it from swaying and damaging the building’s exterior. The Ginkgo Tree is believed to have been on the property when Wright purchased it, making the tree well over 100 years old.