

[Home & Garden](#)

## An architectural pilgrimage: Private homes in Oak Park open May 18 for Wright Plus

By Katherine Rodeghier  
Daily Herald Correspondent  
Posted 5/6/2019 6:00 AM



•  
•  
The Francis J. Woolley House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1893 and on the Wright Plus tour this year, is one of his early designs in Oak Park. *Courtesy of Frank Lloyd Wright Trust, photographed by James Caulfield*

---



•  
•  
The dining room of Wright's William E. Martin House, 1903, will be on the Wright Plus tour May 18. *Courtesy of Frank Lloyd Wright Trust, photographed by James Caulfield*

---



•  
•  
Wright designed his Prairie Style William C. Fricke House in Oak Park in 1901. It is one of eight private homes designed by Wright and his contemporaries on the 2019 Wright Plus housewalk. *Courtesy of Frank Lloyd Wright Trust, photographed by James Caulfield*

---

Few things in life prove worth standing in line. For me, the rare chance to peek inside homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright ranks near the top.

Last May, my Glen Ellyn friend Mary Constantino and I willingly queued up for the once-a-year opportunity to enter private homes designed by Wright and his contemporaries in Oak Park. We were

among more than 2,000 architecture fans making the pilgrimage to Wright's former hometown from almost every U.S. state and several foreign countries for the annual [Wright Plus](#) housewalk.

This year's event, on Saturday, May 18, will again feature eight private homes -- three designed by Wright -- plus Wright's recently renovated Unity Temple and his landmark Home and Studio.

My advice to fellow Wright fans: Do what we did and make a full day of it. Pick up your wristband and map at orientation, open at 8 a.m., and plot your course. The private homes can be accessed only on this day between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Walk between them or hop on a free trolley making the rounds. Order a \$15 bag lunch with your ticket or take advantage of special offers at Oak Park restaurants partnering with Wright Plus.

We stood in line anywhere from 10 to 45 minutes at each house. A \$500 Fast Pass would have cut our line time, but we chose not to dig that deeply into our pockets. There are two options that include the fast pass: the Ultimate Saturday package, which includes lunch and dinner, and the three-night Ultimate Plus weekend package. Both are sold out this year, but you can put your name on a waitlist and cross your fingers.

Why the focus on Oak Park? Simple: It has the highest concentration of Wright-designed buildings on the planet.

Wright came to the village as a 22-year-old newlywed in 1889 and spent the next 20 years raising a family of six kids and honing his craft, eventually evolving his trademark Prairie style. His timing was right. Wealthy residents fleeing the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 had set off a construction boom. The ambitious Wright not only designed their homes through his employer, architect Louis Sullivan, but also he built three "bootleg" houses down the street from his home. Sullivan discovered Wright's moonlighting and promptly fired his young protégé. Undeterred, Wright added a studio to his house and continued working there until 1909 when he caused a scandal by running off to Europe with a neighbor, his client's wife.

All the private homes on this year's housewalk are different from those we toured last year, but Wright's will likely showcase his distinctive design elements that make my heart go pitter-pat: inglenooks flanking fireplaces, built-ins, open floor plans, leaded-glass windows and low-hanging light fixtures and entryways -- not a problem for the 5-foot-7-inch architect.

Last year, we ran out of time and energy before we toured all 10 structures, so we saved Unity Temple and Wright's Home and Studio for a return visit to Oak Park. Wright Plus tickets give free access to both, as well as Robie House and the Rookery Light Court in Chicago, through the end of the year.

A few Wright Plus rules: No children younger than 12, no photography inside private homes and large bags must be checked before entering. And no high heels. For goodness sake, wear comfortable shoes. Did I mention we stood in line?

...

## **Wright Plus**

**When:** 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, May 18

**Where:** Orientation at Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio, 951 Chicago Ave., Oak Park

**Tickets:** \$110, discounts for Frank Lloyd Wright Trust members. Proceeds benefit the Trust's education and preservation programs.

**Info:** [flwright.org/wrightplus](http://flwright.org/wrightplus)

<https://www.dailyherald.com/entlife/20190506/an-architectural-pilgrimage-private-homes-in-oak-park-open-may-18-for-wright-plus>