

The Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
1 Village Hall Plaza
Oak Park, IL 60302
(708)383-6400 x280

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
Received
Date Entered

OAK PARK LANDMARK
NOMINATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating individual buildings, sites, structures, or improvements, as Oak Park Landmarks. Please see instructions in Guide to Completing the Oak Park Landmark Nomination Form. Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items. Items marked with a * must be completed for a preapplication determination of eligibility.

- * 1. **Name of Property** THOMAS GALE HOUSE
1a. Historic name SAME
1b. Common Name(s)
- * 2. **Location**
Street Address 1027 CHICAGO AVENUE
Zip Code 60302
- * 3. **Classification**
3a. Ownership of property
 private ___ public (___ federal ___ state ___ local) ___ other
3b. Category of property
 building ___ site ___ structure ___ object
3c. Type of Designation
 exterior ___ interior ___ both
4. **Function or Use**
4a. Historic function(s): (Enter category(ies) from instructions)
DOMESTIC: SINGLE DWELLING
4b. Current function(s): (Enter category(ies) from instructions)
DOMESTIC: SINGLE DWELLING
5. **Description**
5a. Architectural style(s): (Enter category(ies) from instructions)
QUEEN ANNE

Name of Property THOMAS GALE HOUSE Address 1027 CHICAGO AVENUE

5b. Materials: (Enter category(ies) from instructions)
Foundation: STONE Roof: ASPHALT SHINGLES
Walls: WOOD CLAPBOARD Significant decorative:
Windows: WOOD Other:

5c. Narrative Description:
(Describe the historic and current appearance of the property. Use continuation sheets.) ATTACHED

* 6. Statement of Significance
Mark an X on one or more lines for the Historic Preservation Ordinance criteria qualifying the property for Oak Park Landmark designation.

* 6a. Historic Preservation Ordinance Criteria

- A. Significance as an example of:
 architectural;
 cultural;
 economic;
 historic;
 social; or
 other aspect
of the heritage of
 the Village of Oak Park;
 the State of Illinois; or
 the United States.
- B. Location as a site of a significant event in:
 the Village of Oak Park;
 the State of Illinois; or
 the United States.
- C. Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to:
 architectural heritage;
 cultural heritage;
 economic heritage;
 historic heritage;
 social heritage; or
 other aspect
of
 the Village of Oak Park;
 the State of Illinois; or
 the United States.
- D. Exemplification of:
 architectural type or
 style
distinguished by:
 innovation;
 rarity;
 purity;
 uniqueness; or
 overall quality of:
 design;
 materials; or
 craftsmanship.

Name of Property THOMAS GALE HOUSE Address 1027 CHICAGO AVENUE

- E. Identification as the work of a:
 - builder;
 - designer;
 - architect;
 - craftsperson;
 - engineer; or
 - landscape architectwhose individual work is significant in the development of
 - the Village of Oak Park;
 - the State of Illinois; or
 - the United States.

- F. Representation of:
 - architectural;
 - cultural;
 - economic;
 - historic;
 - social; or
 - other themeexpressed in distinctive:
 - areas;
 - districts;
 - places;
 - buildings;
 - structures;
 - works of art; or
 - other objects

- G. Embodiment of design elements that make the property or building
 - structurally or
 - architecturallyinnovative.

* 6b. Period of Significance: 1892

* 6c. Significant dates:
Date of construction: 1892
Alteration date(s) and description(s):
SEE ATTACHED NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Original site if moved: _____ Date Moved: _____
Other: _____

* 6d. Significant Person(s): THOMAS H. GALE - PROMINENT LOCAL REALTOR & DEVELOPER

* 6e. Architect/Builder(s): FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT - ARCHITECT

* 6f. Narrative statement of significance: (Explain the significance of the property. Use continuation sheet(s).)
ATTACHED

Name of Property THOMAS GALE HOUSE Address 1027 CHICAGO AVENUE

7. Major Bibliographical Reference (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form. Use continuation sheet(s) as necessary.)

ATTACHED

8. Representation in Existing Survey(ies)

- Hasbrouck/Sprague Survey of Historic Architecture in Oak Park
 Illinois Historic/Architectural Resources Survey
 Oak Park Historic Resources Survey
 Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic District Nomination
 Other

Other Landmark Designation/Documentation

- National Historic Landmark
 National Register: individual in district
Name of district FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT
 Historic American Building Survey(HABS) & PRAIRIE SCHOOL OF
 Historic American Engineering Record(HAER) ARCHITECTURE

9. Geographical Data

9a. Legal Description: LOT 4 IN THE SUBDIVISION OF LOTS 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16 AND THE NORTH 66 FEET OF LOT 11 IN E.O. GALE'S SUBDIVISION OF BLOCK 4 IN KETTLESTRINGS ADDITION TO HARLEM & VACATION OF ALLEY THEREIN IN THE NW¼ OF SECTION 7, TOWNSHIP 39 NORTH, RANGE 13 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN.

9b. Lot dimensions:

* 10. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: JEAN L. GUARINO, HISTORICAL CONSULTANT
Organization:
Street Address: 3548 N. RACINE
City: CHICAGO State: IL

Date: JULY 18, 2002
Telephone: 773-529-1774
Zip Code: 60657

11. Additional Documentation (Submit the following items with the completed form.)

Photos: Total number _____
(Include representational BLACK AND WHITE photos of the property. List the date and view of each photo.)

Map(s): (Complete appendix)

Additional Items:

Name of Property THOMAS GALE HOUSE Address 1027 CHICAGO AVENUE

THIS PAGE FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

12. Property Owner or Property Tax Payer

Name: MARY ANN BEHRINGER
Organization:
Street Address: 1027 CHICAGO AVENUE Telephone: 708-386-4611
City: OAK PARK State: IL Zip Code: 60302

13. Locator Map - Attach

14. Official Action

Date(s) Owner(s) Notified:
APRIL 15, 2002 - DATE OF OWNER CONSENT LETTER
JULY 24, 2002 - DATE NOTIFIED OF PUBLIC HEARING

Date of Public Hearing: AUGUST 8, 2002

Result:

Date for Village Board Action: NOVEMBER 18, 2002

Result: DESIGNATED AN OAK PARK LANDMARK

Date of Designation: NOVEMBER 18, 2002

15. Alterations to Property Subsequent to Designation

16. Other

CONTINUATION SHEETS FOR THE THOMAS GALE HOUSE NOMINATION

5c. Narrative Description

The 1892 Thomas H. Gale house is located at 1027 Chicago Avenue in Oak Park, Illinois, and faces north. The two-story Queen Anne style structure is rectangular in plan, rests upon a stone foundation and is sheathed in wood clapboard. Its high-pitched hipped roof is covered with green asphalt shingles and features overhanging eaves, polygonal dormers and a brick chimney. The structure's northeast and southeast corners break out into polygonal towers with conical roofs. The windows in each tower are a mixture of fixed and casement windows that are arranged in horizontal bands. All window and door openings are wood with wood frames. A driveway along the east side of the house leads to a wood clapboard garage with hipped roof.

The north (front) façade features a wood porch with ironing railings, front door and adjacent casement window. In addition to the previously described two-story tower at the northeast corner, this elevation also includes a dormer with a pair of casement windows.

The east elevation is terminated at each end by the two-story polygonal towers. In between, there is a small awning window on the basement level, a fixed window with 15 panes on the first floor, and a door on the second floor that is recessed into the roof.

The south (rear) elevation is dominated by the tower at its eastern corner and also features a wood door and four double-hung windows on the first floor. The two westernmost windows and door are situated in a small, projecting, one-story enclosed room.

The west elevation has a small, projecting vestibule accessed by wood stairs at its southern end that features a double-hung window and a door that faces north. There are three small windows on the basement level. On the first floor, there is a casement window at the northern end and a pair of double-hung windows in the center. This elevation also features two dormers, one directly above the other, both of which include a pair of casement windows. The topmost dormer has a shed roof.

The Thomas H. Gale house has experienced few exterior alterations, none of which have substantially detracted from its street façade. The current front porch with iron railings is non-original, and four original casement windows in the two towers were later replaced with double-hung windows. The center of the east elevation originally featured a two-story side porch, which was removed in 1944.¹ At that time, the first floor door that had accessed the porch from the central library was replaced by the present window.² Also in 1944, the original porch and butler's pantry at the rear of the residence were combined to create a kitchen. The following year, a small, enclosed porch was added to the rear elevation.³ The pair of double-hung windows along the west elevation is non-original, and were possibly added when the original kitchen on this side of the structure was converted to a bedroom.

¹ Permit no. 23708, issued 6 July 1944.

² Ibid.

³ Permit no. 23856, issued 1 March 1945.

CONTINUATION SHEETS FOR THE THOMAS GALE HOUSE NOMINATION

6f. Statement of Significance

The Thomas Gale House is a rare surviving example of Frank Lloyd Wright's "bootlegged" houses, designed between 1891 and spring 1893 while he was still working for Adler and Sullivan. Of the eight executed bootlegged houses, only six are extant. Although some of these structures feature popular architectural styles of the era, such as the Queen Anne Thomas Gale House, as a group they represent Wright's evolving design ideas during the 1890s that would lead to his mature Prairie style of architecture. The Thomas Gale House has retained excellent integrity, and aside from the removal of original front and side porches, its exterior stands virtually unchanged from its 1892 appearance.

Historical Context of the Thomas H. Gale House

Thomas Hart Gale, the son of Edwin Oscar and Julia (Hart) Gale, was a member of one of Oak Park's oldest and most prominent families. Edwin Gale, the eldest son of Abram and Sarah (Silloway) Gale, who were natives of Massachusetts, was born in New York City on May 7, 1832. In April 20, 1835, the family set sail for Chicago, via the Hudson River, Erie Canal and the Great Lakes, arriving on May 25, 1835.⁴

Abram Gale purchased 320 acres in the south part of Jefferson Township from the federal government on June 15, 1835, during Chicago's first public land sale.⁵ His family spent their summers at the farmhouse he built on this parcel, as Abram continued to live and work in Chicago. He later subdivided the large tract of land into a town, naming it Galewood.⁶ Sarah Gale operated Chicago's first millinery, and in 1847, Abram Gale built the first two brick commercial structures on Randolph Street.⁷ One of these was rented to a German named George Bormann, who operated a drug store on the ground floor. Edwin and William Gale, the eldest sons of Abram, bought out Bormann in 1856, continuing the business under the name of the Gale Brothers.

Also in 1856, Edwin Gale married Julia Hart of Belvidere, Illinois,⁸ and their eldest son Walter was born in 1859. At that time the young family was living on DesPlaines Street near Washington Boulevard, in the heart of the fashionable near West Side residential district.⁹

⁴ *The Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery of Representative Men of Chicago*. (Chicago and New York: American Biographical Publishing Co., 1892) 400.

⁵ A.T. Andreas. *History of Cook County, Illinois*. (Chicago: A.T. Andreas, 1884) 789.

⁶ Following the death of his wife Sarah on September 5, 1881, Abram Gale moved into his son Edwin's Oak Park home. Abram Gale died on April 4, 1889, at age 93. His funeral was at Unity Church in Oak Park, with burial at Graceland Cemetery in Chicago. On June 29, 1889, Galewood became a part of the City of Chicago, as Jefferson Township was annexed to the city. Andreas, 789.

⁷ *The Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery of Representative Men of Chicago*, 400.

⁸ "Mrs. Gale Is Dead." *Oak Leaves*, 22 July 1916.

⁹ "Walter Gale Dies." *Oak Leaves*, 25 March 1916.

Edwin and Julia Gale would eventually have five additional sons: E. Vincent, Thomas Hart, Abram, Greenleaf Whittier and Oliver M. (See Attachment A for photo.)

In 1863,¹⁰ Edwin Gale purchased a 2 ½ acre lot in Oak Park from Joseph Kettlestrings, where he built a large Gothic Revival style house at 347 Lake Street, the northwest corner of Lake and Kenilworth (demolished 1961). The Gales were one of the earliest families to settle in the area. At that time, the village was called Oak Ridge and was home to just a scattering of families. Transportation to Chicago was provided by one train per day on the Chicago and Northwestern line.

In 1866, William F. Blocki, a German native and resident of River Forest, replaced William H. Gale in the family's retail drugstore business, which continued under the firm name of Gale & Blocki. Edwin Gale and William Blocki were also involved in some real estate development. During the summer of 1871, they purchased 40 acres of wooded land between the Northwestern station at River Forest (then Thatcher) and Madison Street, which they planned to immediately subdivide and develop.¹¹ These plans were put on hold when their business went up in flames in the Chicago Fire of 1871. However, the firm immediately reopened for business in a rented storefront at 57 W. Randolph.¹² They relocated to the new Palmer House Hotel at 15 E. Monroe Street some time after it was built in 1873.¹³

In his 1884 *History of Cook County*, A.T. Andreas noted that, "The firm of Gale & Blocki is well and favorably known throughout the country as the leading retail drug establishment of Chicago."¹⁴ Andreas also noted that the firm was "largely interested in the suburb of River Forest, owning a large share of the land south of the railroad track, and have already erected seven houses thereon."¹⁵ This was presumably the same land that Edwin Gale and William Blocki had purchased immediately prior to the 1871 Chicago Fire. Gale & Blocki later expanded their operations with branch stores in Austin and Oak Park, and Edwin Gale's sons Walter and Abram eventually joined the business as partners.¹⁶

In addition to his work as a druggist, Edwin Gale was also a noted writer, contributing poems to the *Chicago Journal* and other magazines for many years. He recorded his recollections of Chicago's frontier life in a book titled *Reminiscences of Early Chicago* (1903). Edwin's wife Julia Gale was a charter member of the old Chautauqua Club, the forerunner of later literary organizations in Oak Park, and was prominent in various benevolent circles.¹⁷ Edwin and Julia Gale were both Universalists and liberal supporters of Oak Park's Unity Church. Edwin was a

¹⁰ William Halley. *Halley's Pictorial Oak Park*. (Oak Park: William Halley, Publisher, 1898) 34.

¹¹ Edwin O. Gale. *Reminiscences of Early Chicago and Vicinity*. (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1902) 425.

¹² *Ibid*, 418.

¹³ The Gale & Blocki drug store remained at the same location after the current Palmer House Hotel was built in 1928. It was operated by Edwin Gale's son Abram until his retirement in 1933. When the business was purchased by Druggist Maurice Norman from Hilton Hotels Corp. in 1958, it was believed to be Chicago's oldest drug store. "Sell Oldest Drugstore In Chicago," *Chicago Daily News*, 3 Oct. 1958.

¹⁴ Andreas, 806.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ Gale & Blocki opened a store on Oak Park Avenue in Jan. 1891, which was operated by Walter Gale. The *Oak Park Vindicator* described it as, "one of the finest stores outside Chicago." *Oak Park Vindicator*, 3 Jan. 1891.

¹⁷ "Mrs. Gale Is Dead." *Oak Leaves*, 22 July 1916.

founding member of the Congregation, established on February 1, 1871, and served on the Building Committee for its first church, which was completed in March 1872.¹⁸

Edwin and Julia Gale's third son, Thomas Hart Gale, was born in Oak Park in 1866. He attended Oak Park High School and then the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, graduating in 1888.¹⁹ Returning home, he entered the real estate business in Oak Park. After initially working with F.C. Wood, Gale went into business for himself in 1891.²⁰ In November 1891, Thomas Gale married Laura Robeson of Port Huron, Michigan, who was also a graduate of the University of Michigan.²¹ The couple eventually had two children, Sarah Constance, known as Sally (born 1897) and Edwin Oscar (born 1900).²²

At the time of his 1891 marriage, Thomas Gale purchased six adjacent lots on Chicago Avenue from his father (Lots 11 to 16).²³ They were located on Block 4 of Kettlestring's Addition to Oak Park, which Edwin Gale had subdivided. Thomas Gale selected Frank Lloyd Wright, an acquaintance from Unity Church,²⁴ to design a home for himself and Laura on the east 60 ft. of Lot 14 and the west 40 ft. of Lot 15. (See Attachment B for Subdivision Maps.)

Work on Thomas Gale's new home at 324 Chicago Avenue²⁵ began in July 1892, as noted in the *Oak Park Reporter*: "Thomas H. Gale has begun the erection of a residence for himself on Chicago Ave. near Forest. The cost will be \$3,000. F.L. Wright is the architect. R.P. Parker will build a similar house, just east of Mr. Gale's."²⁶ Thomas and Laura Gale resided with Thomas's parents at 347 Lake Street while their house was under construction during the summer of 1892,²⁷ and the structure was completed by the end of the year.²⁸ In October 1893, Thomas Gale's brother Walter purchased the adjacent lot to the west, and also selected Wright to design his new residence.

¹⁸ Andreas, 785.

¹⁹ "Thos H. Gale Dead." *Oak Leaves*, 23 March 1907.

²⁰ *Oak Park Vindicator*, 7 March 1891.

²¹ *Oak Park Reporter*, 6 November 1891.

²² "Thos H. Gale Dead." *Oak Leaves*, 23 March 1907.

²³ Cook County, Illinois, Clerk's Office – Tract Book Records. Tract Book 110, p. 217. In Oct. 1893, Thomas Gale further subdivided his six lots into nine lots.

²⁴ As a Universalist and member of Unity Church, Gale surely would have been acquainted with Wright, who was also active in the Congregation.

²⁵ Addresses for east/west streets in Oak Park changed in 1906. The Thomas Gale House's address changed at that time to 1027 Chicago Avenue.

²⁶ *Oak Park Reporter*, 8 July 1892. Many sources, including William Storrer and Francis Steiner, repeat the argument that Thomas Gale commissioned Wright to design houses for both himself and Robert Parker. However, according to the Cook County Tract Book records (Tract Book 110, p. 217), Gale sold the west 20 ft of Lot 16 and the east 30 ft. of Lot 15 to Parker on May 4, 1892, two months before construction began on both of their homes. Also, original drawings of Robert Parker's home, as printed in the *Frank Lloyd Wright Monograph*, list Parker, and not Gale, as the client.

²⁷ Both the 1892 *Oak Park Directory* and a July 8, 1892 advertisement for Thomas Gale's real estate business in the *Oak Park Reporter* list him as living at 347 Lake Street.

²⁸ A September 1892 wedding notice for Abram Gale in the *Oak Park Reporter* states that the newlyweds will spent the winter at his brother Thomas Gale's new house on Chicago Avenue, indicating that its completion was predicted by the end of the year. Thomas and Laura Gale apparently only lived in their Chicago Ave. home until 1898, as the *Oak Park Directory* for that year first lists them as residing at 109 N. Kenilworth. According to the local directories, they remained at the Kenilworth address until Thomas Gale's death in 1907.

In addition to his active participation in Unity Church, Thomas Gale was also involved in Oak Park's social, civic and business affairs. He served for a number of years as the Oak Park tax collector, and was a member of the Oak Park Club, the Business Men's Association and the Military Club of the Village.²⁹ He was also vice president of the Oak Park Cycling Club and a prominent member of the Westward Ho Golf Club in Galewood, winning many of its trophies and honors. Gale enjoyed a successful career as a local realtor and developer and was appointed President of the newly established Oak Park Real Estate Board in 1906.³⁰ He also received a law degree, graduating from the Chicago Law School in 1902.

Five years after Wright designed his first home in Oak Park, Thomas Gale commissioned Wright to design a summer cottage for his family in Whitehall, Michigan. White Lake opens to Lake Michigan, and Chicagoans could take a steamer to their front door. Thomas Gale and Walter Gerts, whose wives were sisters from Port Huron, Michigan, together purchased the whole of Lot 4 on Section 5 on Birch Brook.³¹ The Thomas Gale cottage was the first to be built.

In 1904, Thomas Gale commissioned Wright to design for him another home in Oak Park, this time on Elizabeth Court.³² This home was not yet built at the time of Gale's unexpected death on March 20, 1907, following surgery for ulcers of the stomach.³³ He was only 41 years old, leaving behind his wife and two children, Sally, age ten, and Edwin, age seven. Noting that his death, "has cast a glow over the entire community," Gale's obituary remembered him as, "a prominent figure in our village life, holding places of honor and trust at the hands of his fellow citizens...A son of this village in a special degree, active in its business and civic affairs."³⁴

Frank Lloyd Wright and the Prairie Style of Architecture

Universally recognized as one of the greatest architects of the twentieth century, Frank Lloyd Wright was born on June 8, 1867, in Richland Center, Wisconsin. Wright moved to Chicago in 1887 and initially worked for Joseph Lyman Silsbee, a prominent architect known for his residences inspired by East Coast architecture. Silsbee introduced Wright to the Shingle style of residential design, which features bold geometric forms, large overhanging roofs, sheltering porches and emphasis on natural materials.

²⁹ "Thos. H. Gale Dead." *Oak Leaves*, 23 March 1907.

³⁰ Gertrude Fox Hoagland, Ed. *Historical Survey of Oak Park, Illinois: Compiled Under Federal Works Progress Administration Project #9516*. (Oak Park: Oak Park Public Library, 1937) 11.

³¹ William Allin Storrer. *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright: A Complete Catalog*, second edition. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1979) 83. The *Oak Park Reporter* noted in its July 23, 1897 issue that, "Thos. H. Gale and family left Wednesday for Birchbrook, White Lake, Mich. where they will occupy their new cottage."

³² According to Storrer, Wright's presentation drawings for the future Mrs. Thomas Gale House were dated 1904. Thomas Gale's March 23, 1907 obituary in the *Oak Leaves* noted that, "He had recently purchased a new home in a beautiful section of our village, and looked forward to many happy years with his family therein."

³³ According to the 1908 *Oak Park Directory*, Thomas Gale's wife Laura and her children were residing in their new Wright-designed home at 4 Elizabeth Court in 1908. Laura Gale lived until August 24, 1943. "Mrs. T.H. Gale Dies: Resident 50 Years." *Oak Leaves*, 2 Sept. 1943.

³⁴ "Thos. H. Gale Dead." *Oak Leaves*, 23 March 1907.

Wright was profoundly influenced by the work of his next employers, Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler. Sullivan, famous for his ornament inspired by nature, crusaded for an authentic American Architecture based on the principle that a building's form should follow its function. Hired originally to develop detailed sketches for the Auditorium Building in Chicago, Wright was soon promoted to head draftsman and developed remarkable skill in residential architecture. Most notable was his design of the Charnley House in Chicago's Gold Coast neighborhood. Featuring flat, streamlined wall planes, spare ornamentation, and an overall appearance of horizontality, the rectangular structure looks unmistakably modern.

Wright's residential commissions were a small part of his duties at Adler and Sullivan's office, however, and were usually done at home after hours. He mainly worked on the firm's numerous commercial commissions. Wright also contributed to the firm's design for the Transportation Building for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. In this capacity, he would have made a number of trips to the fair grounds in Jackson Park and likely saw the Ho-o-den, a replica temple that comprised the official exhibit of the Imperial Japanese government. This encounter would have spurred his already dawning fascination with Japanese art.

In 1889, Sullivan loaned Wright the money to buy a lot and build a home in Oak Park for himself and his bride-to-be, Catherine Tobin. Wright's family grew quickly and eventually comprised six children: Lloyd was born in 1890; John in 1892, Catherine in 1894, David in 1895, Frances in 1898, and Robert Llewellyn in 1903. In order to supplement his income, Wright began to design houses in the evenings outside Adler and Sullivan's practice. They were all built or projected between 1891 and late spring 1893. Two of these were located on Chicago Avenue, just down the block from his own home: the Robert P. Parker House and the Thomas Gale House. Wright designed six additional "bootlegged" houses that were built, including the Harlan House, Chicago (demolished); MacHarg House, Chicago (demolished); Blossom House, Chicago; McArthur House, Chicago; Emmond House, LaGrange, Illinois; Peter Goan House, LaGrange, Illinois.³⁵

According to Wright scholar Grant Carpenter Mason, at first glance, the character of the bootlegged houses seems to retrogress from the great promise of the earlier Charnley House. Rather than pointing the way to a new modernism, they include historical styles such as Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial and Queen Anne. However, as a group they also demonstrate the dawning individuality of Wright as he adapted these styles to his personal conception of architecture. For example, although the Colonial Revival Blossom House features a classical portico, fan-lighted doorway and Palladian windows, Wright eliminated the Classical cornice, flattened the hip roof and added a massive chimney of Roman brick. The McArthur House has a prominent gambrel roof—the hallmark of the Dutch Colonial style—along with picturesque dormers and a polygonal corner bay. However, the use of Roman brick on the lower façade, a horizontal strip of casement windows in the bay, and an entrance situated along the side rather than facing the street, are all foreshadowings of Wright's later Prairie style.

The Thomas Gale, Robert Parker and Robert Emmond houses are all similar in appearance and plan, the Emmond being a mirror of the others. All three houses have picturesque elements that

³⁵ List of bootlegged houses taken from: Grant Carpenter Manson. *Frank Lloyd Wright To 1910: The First Golden Age*. (NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1958) 48.

characterize the Queen Anne style, such as asymmetrical massing, steeply pitched roofs with dormers, polygonal towers, and front entry porches – all of which Wright would later abandon. However, the Gale and Parker houses in particular represent a considerably streamlined version of the Queen Anne style, and feature rectilinear elements that would soon become a hallmark of Wright's work. In both houses, the square mass of the first floor dramatically contrasts with the vertical emphasis of the adjacent towers. Other premonitions of Wright's mature Prairie style in the Gale and Parker houses include the horizontal banding of the windows in the double towers, the wide, overhanging eaves, and the use of casement windows. The rectilinear windows are bordered by muntins to create a geometric grid pattern. Another deviation from the Queen Anne style is the use of only one cladding material—clapboard—rather than a variety of materials as is common to the style.

The design of the bootlegged houses discussed above violated Wright's contract with Sullivan and brought about his dismissal from the firm in 1893. Wright immediately set up his own practice in Room 1501 of the Schiller Building in downtown Chicago and constructed a studio connected to his Oak Park home in 1898. During the remainder of the 1890s, Wright continued to develop his principles for a new type of residential architecture, a subject that would continue to fascinate him throughout his career. Much of Wright's work in this decade foreshadowed what was to come, such as the 1894 Winslow House in River Forest. A rectangular structure of great simplicity with a hip roof and overhanging eaves, the Winslow House was a true forerunner of the Prairie House. An interesting contrast to the Winslow House is the 1895 Nathan Moore House, designed for a lawyer who lived across Forest Avenue from the Wrights. According to Wright's account in his *Autobiography*, the client insisted on an English Tudor style and Wright agreed because he needed the money. To Wright's chagrin, the Moore house was considered as successful as the Winslow House.³⁶

Other early Wright-designed homes in Oak Park are the Francis J. Woolley house (1893) at 1030 W. Superior, the Harrison P. Young house (1895) at 334 N. Kenilworth, and the Harry C. Goodrich house (1896) at 534 East Avenue. Like so many of Wright's other early residences, his Oak Park designs from the 1890s feature steeply pitched roofs, polygonal dormers, and bay windows, as well as a tendency for complex, interlocking masses. In addition, Wright's early residences often displayed a variety of materials, textures and classical detailing, such as the Walter H. Gale house, with its combination of shingles, clapboards, brick, diamond pane leaded glass, and a Palladian window. Later Prairie Houses would be streamlined in terms of their massing and use of materials. Square, semi-detached porches, seen in the Woolley and the Goodrich houses, were later abandoned by Wright in favor of entries hidden behind low walls or along side elevations. However, many of Wright's residential designs of the 1890s also included at least some hints of the architect's emerging style, such as broad chimneys and strips of casement windows.

The first decade of the twentieth-century represented the end of Wright's transitional period and the start of what historian Grant Manson calls his "First Golden Age." After ten years of experimentation, Wright officially unveiled the Prairie House in 1900 with the design of two model houses published in the *Ladies Home Journal*. A number of Oak Parkers commissioned

³⁶ Frank Lloyd Wright. *An Autobiography: Frank Lloyd Wright*. (New York: Horizon Press, 1977 reprint. Originally published 1932) 152-153.

homes in the new style, including Frank Thomas (1901), William Fricke (1901), Arthur Heurtley (1902), William Martin (1903), Edwin Cheney (1904), Peter Beachy (1906) and Mrs. Thomas Gale (1909). These homes were generally well regarded by both architecture critics and the general public. Throughout this decade, Wright's Oak Park Studio served as a laboratory where the architect and several colleagues refined his Prairie principles, designing an impressive number of structures that signaled a new and highly influential era in American residential design.

Prairie style homes represented a dramatic departure from the tall Victorian homes of the day, and eliminated all references to historical styles. Sweeping horizontal lines are emphasized in these structures by low, hipped roofs, overhanging eaves, strips of casement windows and continuous sills. The use of natural colors and materials, such as Roman brick or stucco with wood trim, are other Prairie style hallmarks, as these homes were meant to blend in with their settings. After 1900, Wright discarded the double-hung window in favor of the casement and arranged his fenestration in horizontal strips. The main living spaces of Prairie style homes are often situated above a raised first floor, such as in the Heurtley and Frank Thomas houses, allowing for maximum privacy of the homeowners. Some Prairie homes are contained as rectangular blocks while others have projections. The front entrance is often hidden in some way, either tucked away within a deep porch, behind a terrace wall, or recessed within the side of the structure. Ornamentation is carefully integrated into the structure, and includes art glass windows, built-in flower boxes and geometric urns. In all of his streamlined Prairie homes, Wright eliminates the stuffy attic and the dank "unwholesome" basement.

Inside the Prairie home, plans were loose and flowing, with interior partitions reduced to a minimum and often replaced by screens that merely served to indicate the type of use. Whenever possible, Wright preferred to design all the furnishings of the house: carpets, draperies, lighting fixtures and furniture, as he strongly believed that these elements should be integral features of the building.

Wright's twenty year Oak Park period ended in 1909 when he left his family and traveled to Berlin with the wife of a client to publish a large drawing portfolio of his work—the Wasmuth portfolio—in the following year. At the time of his departure, Wright had designed 20 buildings in Oak Park. Ranging from tall, gable-roofed residences, to low, hipped-roofed houses in the Prairie style idiom, these structures comprise an outdoor museum of Wright's evolving design ideas.

CONTINUATION SHEETS FOR THE THOMAS GALE HOUSE NOMINATION

7. Major Bibliographical References

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Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest – Gale Family Folder. Photo of Edwin Gale's sons.

Village of Oak Park. Building permits for the Thomas Gale House. (Copies of the permits are available on microfiche at the Oak Park Village Hall-Building Department.)

- Permit no. 23708, issued 6 July 1944. (making larger parlor and removing side porch on east side of bldg and replacing with window; also installing a modern kitchen)
- Permit no. 23856, issued 1 March 1945. (extending open porch on rear of residence)
- Permit no. 24689, dated 12 July 1947. (single car garage; no other garage now on lot)

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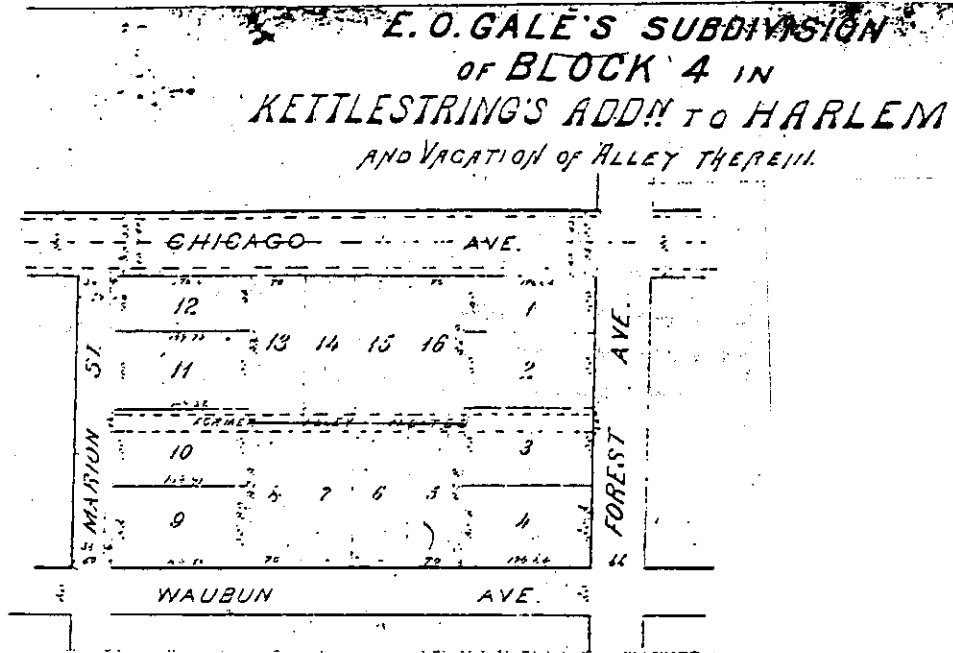
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- Oak Park Reporter*, 8 July 1892.
- Oak Park Reporter*, 14 April 1893.
- Oak Park Reporter*, 23 June 1893.
- Oak Park Reporter*, 10 November 1893.
- Oak Park Reporter*, 23 July 1897. ("Thos. H. Gale and family left Wednesday for Birchbrook, White Lake, Mich. where they will occupy their new cottage.")
- Oak Park Vindicator*, 17 January 1891. (Blurb on the annual election of the Oak Park Cycling Club. Notes that Thos. Gale was elected Vice President. Issue also includes a description of the newly-opened Gale & Blocki drug store on Oak Park Ave.)
- Oak Park Vindicator*, 7 March 1891. (Notice that Thomas H. Gale has gone into business for himself as a realtor.)
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- Storrer, William Allin. *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright: A Complete Catalog*, second edition. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1979.
- "Thos H. Gale Dead." *Oak Leaves*, 23 March 1907.
- "Walter Gale Dies." *Oak Leaves*, 25 March 1916.



Six sons of Edward and Julia Gale in 1906.
(Photo copied from the Gale Family folder in the collection of the Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest.)

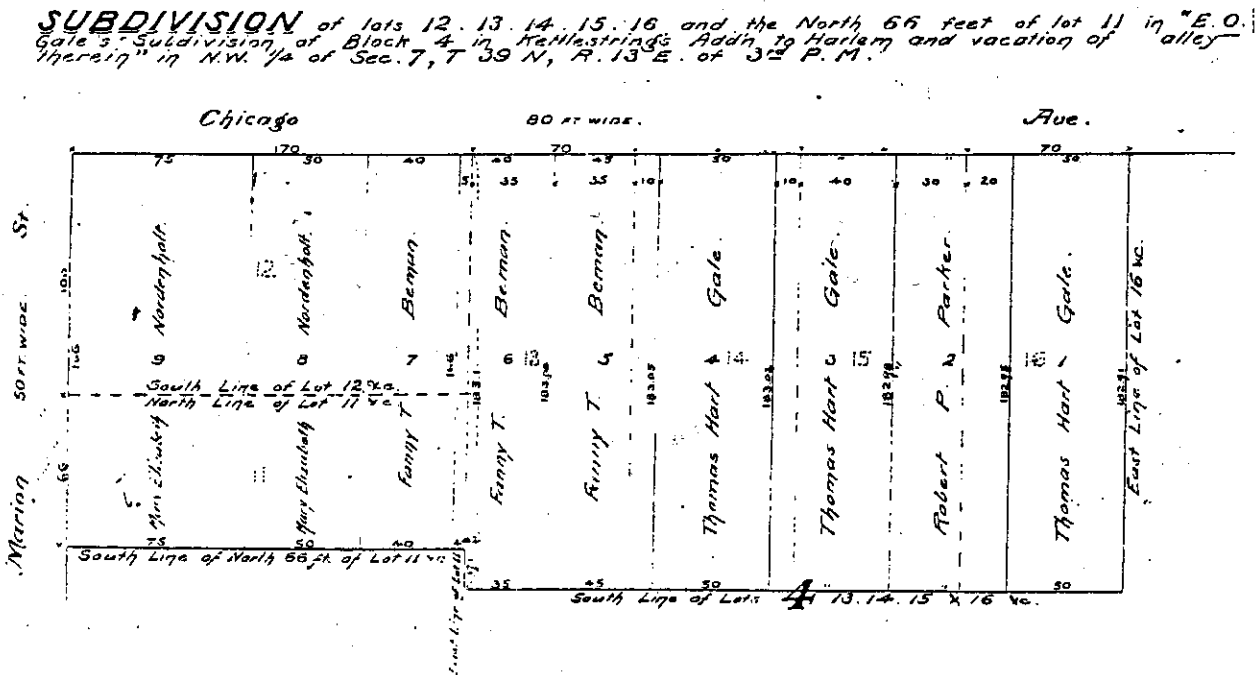


Edwin Oscar Gale.
(Photo copied from the Gale Family folder in the collection of the Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest.)



Map showing the six adjacent lots (Lots 11 to 16) on Chicago Ave. that Thomas Gale purchased from his father, Edwin Gale, in 1891.

(Source: Cook County, Illinois, Clerk's Office - Tract Book Records. Tract Book 110, p. 196B.)



Map showing Thomas Gale's further subdivision of his original six lots along Chicago Ave. into nine lots (Lots 1 to 9). The Thomas Gale house is mainly situated on Lot 4.

(Source: Cook County, Illinois, Clerk's Office - Tract Book Records. Tract Book 110, p. 218B.)

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... had married him. How sad the disappointment when it dawned upon her innocent mind that her husband was addicted to the use of strong liquor, and that he was also a user of arsenic. You would hardly expect them to get along pleasantly as husband and wife, being so differently constituted. Of course there were stormy scenes and these led to dissensions, and Mrs. Maybrick tried to secure a divorce from the man who had promised to protect her and care for her. The divorce was never obtained.

The husband sickened and died. His was a powerful family, of means and

... the son came to be the ruler instead of his mother, and thousands of people rejoice at the disappointment he has given not only his own subjects, but the world at large. It was thought by many that the wild, frivolous boy and prince would be an unfit ruler over a great nation; but he showed the people that he is humane and that he has a heart, and that it beats for the poor, the unfortunate and those in distress.

No case in modern times has excited interest like that in the Maybrick case. For years women all over the world have been working for Mrs. Maybrick's release, but unsuccessfully.

THOS. H. GALE

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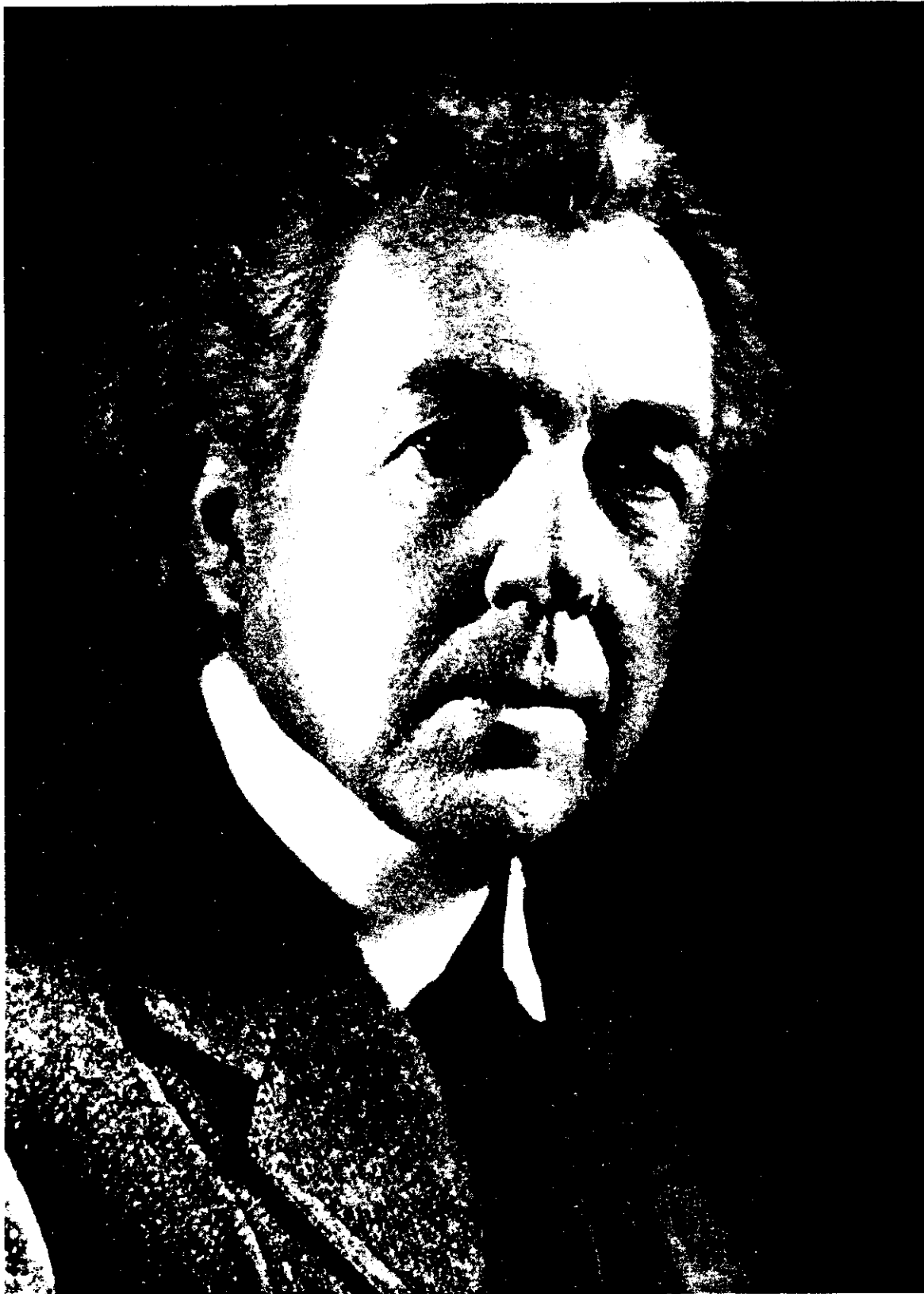
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Undated photo of architect Frank Lloyd Wright
Source: Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest

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Thomas Gale House



1027 Chicago Avenue
Thomas Gale House

