



TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley

BRADLEY HOUSE CAMPUS

by Frank Lloyd Wright, 1900

A Kankakee County Architectural Landmark
On the Kankakee River at 701 S. Harrison Ave., Kankakee

The Community Foundation developed a Communityworks Fund Impact Plan in 2007 which includes "Assisting to develop the feasibility of a community center at the Bradley House and Hickox House, homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, as well as what is needed to create the center, make it sustainable over time, and what human, institutional, and financial resources might be tapped."

Reference Guide prepared by Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley
105 E. Court St, Kankakee, 815-939-1611

info@endowthefuture.org ♦ www.endowthefuture.org

Pam Debono, Board Chair
Roger Benson, Hollice Clark, Cynthia Cooper, Scott Franco, Jimmy Joines,
Marcie Kolberg, Susan Legris, Dr. Stonewall McCuiston, Lynn O'Brien,
Paul Snellenberger, Jason Soucie, Mike Van Mill
Norm Strasma, Executive Director; Stacy Reaman, Office Manager

***OUTLINE Suggested by: John LaMotte, Lakota Group, Consultants to City of Kankakee
Information added by Gaines & Sharon Hall, Owners of Bradley House,
& Norm Strasma, Executive Director, Community Foundation***

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April 2008

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) revolutionized American Architecture

Almost half a century after his death, and well over a century since the completion of his earliest solo residential commission, we see his architectural principles expressed everywhere. They have so thoroughly become part of our architectural vocabulary that we may take them for granted – especially in cases where Wright’s ideas were expropriated and misused by builders of cookie-cutter tract houses.

His ideas could not be taken for granted during his lifetime; they were far too radical. Wright’s Prairie houses of the early twentieth century mirrored the Midwestern landscape with their ground-hugging horizontal lines. His 1920s California houses showed off his evolving ideas on concrete block construction and integrality of ornament. His Usonian houses of the forties and fifties brought stylish housing within the economic reach of many. And his masterworks – Fallingwater, Wingspread, his own Taliesins – secured his place as the most important architect in American history.

Wright considered his structures “organic architecture” because they grew from the characteristics of the site, the materials to be found locally, and his perception of the shapes that would best answer those of their surroundings. Enhancing the unity of his residential designs were the custom furniture pieces, art glass windows, textiles, accessories, and landscaping that he often created. Each house by Frank Lloyd Wright was an intricate composition of interrelated elements, a harmonious work of art.

The Vision

Thousands of visitors find their way annually to Wright properties all over the country that are open as tourist sites. Having as a public destination the house that changed the face of American architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright's B. Harley Bradley House and the first of his Prairie Style designs, could be beneficial to Kankakee County and the area.

It is important for all to have a clear understanding that our only purpose for buying and restoring the Bradley House and Stable was to accomplish the ultimate goal of getting the property into the hands of a non-profit entity that can make the house a tourist destination, as it truly should be for everyone, nationally and internationally, to enjoy. The 20 November 2005 issue of The Daily Journal stated that Mayor Don Green of Kankakee said the city is very interested in buying the house and stable and is actively seeking grants to alleviate the cost. Such ownership would allow people who have purchased items that were originally part of the house and its furnishings to return them to the house for posterity and receive a tax benefit for doing so. Many of the art glass windows, all of the art glass cabinet doors, all of the light screens above the Dining Room table, and all of the furnishings have been missing from the house for many years, disappearing piece by piece for monetary gain.

As of this writing, approximately 30 months after purchasing the house and spending 14 months in temporary quarters during recovery from a fire, the stable is restored and functioning as a gift shop. The house has been returned to its original 1900 configuration with all of the rooms intact. The major element remaining to achieve the original design is installing 14 interior doors with hardware, whose openings were introduced when returning to the original floor plan.

The property is in the overall best condition it has enjoyed in many years. All interior walls have been repainted using the original scumbling technique; floors have been refinished; all original bathrooms are in place with new fixtures and fittings; all woodwork has been refinished or replaced where missing; all cabinets have been restored with hardware; there are new interior wood-framed screens/storm windows on nearly 100 windows; there is a completely new roof; there is new electrical/mechanical with new controls; the house has six zones of heating and cooling; the Stable is heated and cooled and is new throughout. Detailed items are still being completed, but the house and stable could be immediately viewed by the public once in the hands of a non-profit owner. We can vacate the house as soon as a purchase can be consummated.

When the Bradley House is under control of a non-profit entity, it seems the next logical step would be for the entity to purchase and restore the Hickox House next door, also designed by Wright in 1900. These houses represent a unique setting with two Wright-designed houses side by side and could serve as an excellent tourism and economic development opportunity.

Sincerely,

Gaines B. Hall & Sharon A. Hall

The House

“This is the house that changed the face of American architecture.”

With this design, Frank Lloyd Wright left behind all of the architectural styles of Europe that had influenced buildings in America. Ornamentation took on a completely new form; the ornamentation became integral with the building.

The house was the beginning of what came to be known as the Prairie Style that became one of the dominant architectural styles for the first ten years of the 20th Century.

Architectural Significance

The property, located in the National Historic District of Kankakee, is a Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Associate Site. Although the house has never been placed individually on the National Historic Register, with its national architectural significance, to do so only would require completing the necessary application, which is currently being processed. With the house’s status of being the first of one of the most significant American architectural styles, there is speculation that it could possibly be designated as a National Historic Landmark, placing it in the category of truly significant American landmarks.

House Area

House, 6,000 sq ft on two floors & 3,000 sq ft basement
Stable & Breezeway, 3,000 sq ft on two floors, no basement

Grounds, total lot size: one acre
River Frontage: 360 feet

Background of Owners

A Man on a Mission, Restoring the First Wright Prairie Home

“The Bradley House and Stable, located 60 miles south of Chicago, has had a curvy path through history, and I guess I have too; our paths just happened to cross. I wouldn’t have begun this restoration, which I expect to take many years, if I hadn’t come to know one particular specialty contractor with whom I had worked on three other previous projects. My wife Sharon and I went into this with eyes wide open. We did it not because we wanted to own a Wright house, but because we wanted our area not to lose a Wright house.”

*Reprinted from AIArchitect, July 2005, publication of
The American Institute of Architects.*

The current owners, Gaines and Sharon Hall, in order to save the Stable from demolition, purchased the property in January 2005 and moved into the house. It was the first time the house had served totally as a residence in many years. They restored the Stable to its original configuration and opened it as a gift shop in November 2005. The restoration of the Stable earned it the distinguished 2006 Driehaus Award for Adaptive Use from Landmarks Illinois.

At that point, the Halls began the restoration of the house, returning it to its original floor plan and installing many items that had not been completed in the 1990 rehabilitation.

The restoration has been essentially completed in the fall of 2007, and the Halls are ready to transfer ownership to a non-profit entity who can open the house and the stable as a museum and tourist destination, the purpose for which the Halls undertook the project.

Owners through the Years

The house was designed as a residence for B. Harley and Anna Bradley in 1900. Bradley came to Kankakee when his grandfather moved the growing Bradley Implement Company to North Kankakee from Chicago. The people of North Kankakee were so pleased to have the new business, they renamed the town Bradley. The Bradleys lived in the house until about 1913.

The next long-term owner was Joseph Dodson. He occupied the property for 34 years until his death in 1949. A member of the Chicago Board of Trade for 22 years, he was a bird lover and at one time president of the National Audubon Society. While there, he built an addition to the Stable (which is no longer standing) where he manufactured bird houses and other bird oriented items and shipped throughout the country.

A few years later, Marvin Hammack & Raymond Schimel, who had been cooks in the U.S. Navy, bought the house and made it into a restaurant called Yesteryear, the name by which most people in the area still refer to it. Yesteryear was known far and wide and operated from 1953 to 1983. It was then sold to continue as a restaurant, but the new owners had financial problems and the restaurant closed within a short period of time.

A few years after the restaurant closed, Steve & Nancy Small, members of a prominent Kankakee family, bought the house in order to restore it to original condition. The house had not had tender care during its years as a restaurant, and most of the furnishings as well as some of the architectural elements of the house were sold for the revenue the items could generate. Mr. Small was well underway with re-establishing the structural integrity of the house when he was kidnapped for ransom. Unfortunately, even though the kidnappers were caught, he died in this botched kidnapping.

In 1989, attorneys Robert LaBeau, Michael Dietchwiler, and Lee Thacker, along with architect Ron Moline, purchased the house from the Small estate and undertook to finish the rehabilitation begun by Small. The new owners, however, planned to use the house for their offices and modified the interior accordingly, removing certain walls and ultimately eliminating 13 rooms from the original plan, to create large open spaces for offices. Furthermore, they had no use for the Stable building attached to the house by a Breezeway, and that building continued its deterioration over the next 16 years.

Background & Description of the Artisans for the Current Restoration

Many individuals and companies have contributed to the restoration of the house and stable. Foremost among those contributors, however, is Tom Knicklebine of Knicklebine Construction. Tom agreed to take on the project, beginning with the restoration of the stable and subsequently moving into the main house where he has replicated many woodwork items and given attention to detail in the overall restoration that is indescribable. The evident major features of the interior of the house are the walls, ceiling, and woodwork. Tom Knicklebine is responsible for all of the woodwork, whether repairing, restoring, or replicating. He has reproduced molding patterns, doors, screen windows and doors, and made all of the operating doors, windows, and cabinets into usable elements.

The walls and ceilings comprise the majority of the interior finish. Lisa Drewniak and Carol Hinspeter of Illusionary Finishes and Textures, LLC have restored every visible surface painstakingly from original plaster samples with the original colors and scumbling technique that was utilized in the original structure.

Hemenover Construction re-roofed the entire complex with wood shingles similar to the original, and Hemenover was responsible for orchestrating the repairs made necessary by the January 6, 2006, fire in the attic of the house.

Plumbing and heating was performed by Glade Plumbing and Heating.
Air conditioning repair following the fire was by Home Appliance & Heating.
Girard Electric was responsible for the electrical work on the stable and the house.
Norm Younka did the new stucco work on the stable.
Replacement art glass damaged in the fire is by Oakbrook Esser Studios.

A dining table and chairs is in place that replicates the original table and chairs designed by Wright. The table and chairs were built by Swartzendruber of northern Indiana. The Halls have added a pool table of prairie design in quarter-sawn oak to match the woodwork in the house. The pool table was not an original item of the house, but the Halls have a grandson and granddaughter who grew up with a pool table in their former house. A pool table was a "must have" item for family recreation.

Recognitions

Driehaus Honor Award for Adaptive Use, for Stable Restoration, October 2006.
Awarded by Landmarks Illinois.

Selected as one of 150 Best Places in State of Illinois by the Illinois Council of
The American Institute of Architects, 2007.

The Campus

Bradley House, 701 S. Harrison, built 1900, owned by Gaines & Sharon Hall, property on the Kankakee River, with Harrison Avenue ending at the river.

Hickox House, 687 S. Harrison, immediately north of Bradley House, built 1900, owned by Jim & Eve Brown, purchased 1977. Property is available to be part of the project; no price has been established.

Appraisal of both properties is in progress.

The District

Riverview Historic District

An organization dedicated to preserving and improving this historic area. Activities include an annual House Walk in December, installation of historic street lights, historic district banners and Christmas decorations.

Bill Yohnka, President,

Board: Bill Balgeman, Lance Beigh, June Boisvert, Heidi Fick, Gordon Freitag, Joan Germano, Jan Homan, Jerry Kern, Anita Schluter, Janice Schmidt

Riverfront Bicycle & Walking Trail

This is a new project which eventually will extend for ten miles along the Kankakee River. Construction on the portion south of river is scheduled to start in summer 2008. It will extend from the River Road Park & Splash Valley aquatic center, along the Kankakee Community College & Shapiro Developmental Center area, to the Schuyler Ave Bridge. A connecting spur route from the bridge will go alongside the Bradley House on its way to Cobb Park. Later, additional segments will go north through Kankakee, Bradley & Bourbonnais, to the Kankakee River State Park.

Bed & Breakfasts (approximately one block from the Bradley House)

Riverview Guest House, opened in 2007

641 S. Chicago Ave, 815-928-9202. Three doors north of Eagle St.

Innkeeper: Juanita Kloske. Email: guestservice@rghbb.com

Website: www.rghbb.com

Magruder House B&B, opened in 2008

691 S. Chicago Ave, 815-252-1094

Corner of Eagle St & Chicago Ave; a Queen Anne Victorian home built in 1892 by Henry A.

Magruder. Innkeepers Scott Watson and Kyle Truong,

Website: www.magruderhouse.com

Neighborhood Partners

774 S. McMullen Dr, has been active for many years improving the residential area to the north.

Bruce Cowhig, Executive Director, 815-939-9700

The City

City of Kankakee Officials

Mayor Don Green

Aldermen Jo Anne Schwade & Cheryl Jones

Kankakee City Comptroller, Jim Spice 815-933-0490

Kankakee City Planner, 815-936-7320

Mayor's Office of Special Events, Linda Hubert, 815-933-0527

City web page: www.ci.kankakee.il.us

Consultants Lakota Group

John LaMotte, Principal, 212 W. Kinzie, 3rd floor, Chicago, IL 60610, 312-467-5445, ext 201, jlamotte@thelakotagroup.com, www.thelakotagroup.com, Consultants doing update of plan for City of Kankakee, to be presented in 2008. Requested to assist in locating a consultant to advise on locating funding and/or historic property administration

Kankakee Chamber of Commerce

New organization, Bill Yohnka, Executive Director, 815-933-0462, 191 S. East Ave, Kankakee

Kankakee City Plan Commission

Loretto Cowhig, Chair, Willie Ames, Vice Chair, Pam Debono, Edwin Eckhardt, Carol Franke, Raylene Harris, Bruce Mathews, Berry McCracken, Dave Robinson, Debra Terrill, Dexter Thompson, Barbara Wells, Lorraine Wilson

Kankakee Development Corporation

Mike O'Gorman, President;

Executive Committee Pam Dunlap, Joe Franco, Scott Franco, Virginia Grapey, Larry Hinton, Bill Johnson, Mike Pinski, Jeff Smith, Mark Smith, Norm Strasma. Bill Yohnka, Executive Director (Tim Schmidt, former executive director, now independent consultant, 150 N. Schuyler)

Kankakee Historic Commission

Terri Hult, Chair, Jim Boisvert, David Debono, Terry Johnston, Claire Schroeder, Scott Watson, Bill Yohnka

Kankakee River Valley Park District

893 W. Station St, Kankakee, 815-939-1311.

Jim Romanek, Executive Director; John Bessette, Superintendent of Parks & Facilities

Jess Gathing, Board President. Board Members: Matt Mullady, John Grill, Roy Collins, Alfred Hollis. Currently provides taxing authority for Kankakee County Museum

The County

Kankakee County Board

189 E. Court St, Kankakee

Karl Kruse, Board Chair

Bill Olthoff, Chair County Planning, Zoning & Agriculture Committee

County web page: www.co.kankakee.il.us

Community Arts Council

PO Box 562, Kankakee, 815-937-ARTS, www.communityartscouncil.org

Janice Miller, President

Economic Alliance of Kankakee County

200 E. Court St, Kankakee

Mike Van Mill, Executive Director

Kankakee Community College

100 College Dr., Kankakee

Dr. Jerry Weber, President

Kankakee County Historic Preservation Commission

Created by the County Board in 2007

Commission Members: Chair: Elisabeth Dunbar, Vice-Chair: Andrew Purcell, John Adams, Mardene Hinton, Terry Johnston, Daron Kinzinger, Ashley Lucas, Dr Jim Paul, one to be appointed. Staff: Mike Martin, Kankakee County Planning Department, 815-937-2940 x 231

Regular monthly meetings at 3:30 pm on the first Monday at the Kankakee County Administrative Building, 189 E. Court St., Kankakee.

Historical Societies

Kankakee County Museum

801 S. Eighth Ave, Kankakee, 815-932-5279

Norman Stevens, Executive Director

Home of the Kankakee County Historical Society, Larry Nolan, President

Board: Nancy Addison, Brenda Albers, Doris Hemstreet, Connie Licon, Lynn O'Brien, Dr. Jerry Weber, Robert Worth

Bourbonnais Grove, 815-933-6452

Essex, 815-365-4048

Kankakee County Convention & Visitors Bureau

1 Dearborn Square, Fifth floor, Kankakee, 815-935-7390

Larry Williams, Interim Executive Director, larry@visitkankakeecounty.com

Board Members: Sharon Kufner, President; Joe Walz, Vice President; Jaclyn Dugan-Roof, Secretary; Nancy Spice, Treasurer; Board: Brian Bitsky, John Branz, Sandi Cianci, Amy Fields, Kelly LaMore, Angela Liszkiewicz, Jim Romanek, Rick Seemann.

Web page: www.visitkankakeecounty.com Endorsement letter received

Kankakee Township

Michael Mulcahy, Supervisor, 187 S. Schuyler, Suite 420, Kankakee, IL 60901

Olivet Nazarene University

Bourbonnais, IL 60914

Dr John Bowling, President

Other Chambers of Commerce

Bradley Bourbonnais Regional, 1690 Newtowne Dr, Bourbonnais, IL 60914, 815-932-2222, Jacklyn Dugan-Roof, Executive Director

Grant Park, 106 W. Taylor, PO Box 473, Grant Park, IL 60940, 815-466-0604, Mike Nicholson, President

Herscher, PO Box 437, Herscher, IL 60941, 815-426-2131, Dan Martin, President

Kankakee Regional, 1135 E. 5000 N. Rd., St George Rd, Bourbonnais, IL 60914, 815-933-7721, David Hinderliter, Executive Director

Manteno, PO Box 574, Manteno, IL 60950, Lisa Price, Executive Director, 815-468-6226

Momence, 29 N. Dixie Hwy, Momence, IL 60954, Pat Cryer, President, 815-472-4620

The Other Partners

Informational & Financial

Partners include many organizations and individuals listed on earlier pages; these are those outside the immediate area, most of who have been consulted on the project.

American Institute of Architects, Washington, DC

Illinois Council of AIA, 1 Old State Capitol Plaza N., Suite 300, Springfield, IL 62701, 217-522-5370, www.aiaill.org. Eastern Illinois Chapter, AIA, 2150-D South Route 45-542, Suite 200, Kankakee, IL 60901, 815-933-1090,

Dana-Thomas House Historic Site, 301 E. Lawrence Ave., Springfield IL 62703 217-785-0851, www.dana-thomas.org, Dr. Donald P Hallmark, Site Manager/Director. Frank Lloyd Wright property owned by the State of Illinois and operated by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy

53 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 1120, Chicago, IL 60604, 312-663-5500, Ronald Scherubel, Executive Director: He confirmed that Bradley House is the first Prairie Style home designed by Wright. Annual Meeting October 9-15, 2007, at the Hilton Northbrook Hotel, Northbrook, Illinois. **“Prairie First & Last” was an optional day trip where members and guests traveled October 10 to Bradley House (morning) & Robie House (afternoon).** The Conservancy is developing a networking group of Frank Lloyd Wright Public Site Administrators. Norm Strasma attended the first meeting in Oak Park in July 2007.

Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Scottsdale, AZ & Spring Green, WI

Taliesin West & East www.taliesinpreservation.org

Extensive contacts have been made by the owners with organizations in this area of Frank Lloyd Wright historic buildings, but none of these have led to funding sources, as these organizations are involved in their own continuing restoration projects.

The Foundation headquarters is located at Taliesin West in Scottsdale, AZ where the architectural school began by Mr. Wright continues to operate. The Foundation also maintains the archives of all of his designs, drawings, writings and correspondence. All designs by Frank Lloyd Wright are copyrighted, and the Foundation issues licenses to manufacture items using Wright designs. Gaines and Sharon Hall have established the Bradley House site as a Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Associate allowing the property to use the copyrighted logos of the Foundation. The Foundation does not provide grants or assistance in the acquisition or renovation of Wright properties.



Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust

931 Chicago Ave., Oak Park, IL 60302, www.gowright.org, 708-848-1976, ext 236, Joan Mercuri, President & CEO. Operates Home & Studio in Oak Park & Robie House, Chicago

Illinois Bureau of Tourism

620 E. Adams, Springfield, IL 62701; 100 W. Randolph, Suite 3-400, Chicago, IL 60601, 312-814-4733, www.enjoyillinois.com, Jan Kostner, Deputy Tourism Director, Jan Kemmerling, Local Tourism Division Manager.

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

1 Old State Capitol Plaza, Springfield, IL 62701, www.Illinois-History.gov
Robert Coomer, Director; Mike Jackson, Chief Architect; Catherine O'Connor, Local Government Services Manager, Preservation Services Division.

Landmarks Illinois

53 W. Jackson Blvd, Suite 1315, Chicago, IL 60604, 312-922-1742, fax 312-922-8112, mail@lpci.org, www.landmarks.org, David Bahlman, President

Wescott House Foundation

1340 E. High St, Springfield, OH 45505, www.westcotthouse.org
Robert Kearns, Chairman of the Board, Frank Lloyd Wright property, opened to public in 2005.

Contacts have been made with other Frank Lloyd Wright properties for reference in developing plans for the Bradley House Campus.

The Strategy & The Progress

COLLABORATION FOCUS

Community Foundation has developed plans with the owners of this process.

Determine organizations, government agencies, businesses and individuals to be involved. An invitation list for workshops was developed from a number of sources; others are welcome to participate in future meetings.

Support from Frank Lloyd Wright interest groups, such as Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy, and other historic agencies and organizations, such as Landmarks Illinois.

Schedule for moving forward

September 26, 2007

Community Foundation arranged this introductory meeting

Description of the project

Answer questions

Discussion about establishing an organizing committee, with name such as Committee to Launch Frank Lloyd Wright Landmark

October 24

Gaines & Sharon Hall, Owners of the Bradley House hosted a meeting and tour of the property

November 7

Follow-up meeting at the Community Foundation; discuss possible uses of building

January 9, 2008

Presentation by Joan Mercuri, President and CEO of Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust, Oak Park, Illinois. Tour for media representatives.

Endorsement letters being requested from key sources such as: Mayor, City of Kankakee, Convention & Visitors Bureau, etc

Determine potential tourism, economic and publicity benefit to community

February 13

March 19

April 22

First Meetings of Future Operations Committee

Discussion Sessions being scheduled for: Finance & Resource Development, Marketing, and Future Operations

Acquisition Opportunities

Develop structure of local organization, establish as 501c3 organization

Financial Direction of Fund for Acquisition:

Local Funds are needed along with seeking support from grants, state and other governments, plus private foundations.

Private Foundations

Personal letters with Bradley House information booklet and newspaper articles being sent by Norm Strasma, Community Foundation, to private foundations and other contacts.

Grants

“Save America’s Treasures” by National Park Service

Getty Foundation has grants up to \$250,000 for restoration of historic buildings

Others being researched

State of Illinois

Representative Lisa Dugan and Senator Debbie Halvorson have voiced their support for the project, and they have been furnished continuing information on the project.

Local Contributions

Gifts of money, stock, or other items convertible into cash could be given to an Endowment Fund now established at the Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley, there are also plans for a pass-through fund. Provision can be setup for gifts of furniture or other historic elements.

It appears that most restorations focus on local funding, with certain grants and government money involved; there is no “national fund” for Frank Lloyd Wright houses.

Administrative Mechanism

Possible government involvement to consider in ownership/tax revenue availability.
Methodology for operation and continued support
Financial & administrative direction for operation
Building maintenance and landscaping program

Discussions being held in preparation for committees being established:

Finance:

Grants Research, Membership Programs, Fundraising, Donations of goods or services, Sponsorships

Marketing:

Tours, Volunteer Programs, Events, Executive Conferences, Pricing, Advertising & Promotion
Operations: Business Plan: Preliminary Budget for Operations, Staffing, Other Administrative Functions

Last Updated 18 May 2008

Thanks to Bill Jurevich, The Image Group – for photography

Thanks to Kankakee County Planning Department for display materials