

# SAVE WRIGHT

EDUCATION □ □ □ ADVOCACY □ □ □ PRESERVATION



Organization  
Information Kit

**M** **MISSION:** The Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy, an international preservation organization, is based in Chicago, Illinois. Founded in 1989, its mission is to facilitate the preservation and maintenance of the remaining structures designed by Frank Lloyd Wright through education, advocacy, preservation easements and technical services.

**H** **ISTORY:** Frank Lloyd Wright is widely considered to be America's greatest architect and one of its most significant artists. In a remarkable career spanning more than 70 years, he created over 1,000 designs, 500 of which were realized. Sadly, nearly 20 percent of his executed works have been destroyed because of fire, neglect or development.

In 1985, a professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo, while attempting to restore the Darwin D. Martin Residence (then owned by SUNY), conceived the idea of a Wright building owners' conference. Shortly thereafter, a conference primarily for directors of publicly-accessible Wright buildings was held. This initial conference confirmed the need for a larger organization to include Wright homeowners, interested architects and scholars as part of a total conservation effort.

By the time of the 1987 conference, a crisis was occurring in the Wright decorative arts marketplace. The demand for Wright furniture and artifacts had reached unprecedented prices. Windows, furniture and architectural ornamentation were appearing on the market and were being gobbled up by deep-pocketed dealers and collectors. At the same time there was a vigorous move to establish a dynamic organization, dedicated to conservation, education and the protection of Wright's remaining architectural heritage. It was suggested that this new organization be open to everyone, not just property owners. The seeds were planted for the Conservancy.



Photo courtesy of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

In 1989, a feasibility meeting, underwritten by the Johnson Foundation, was held at Wingspread (Herbert Johnson Sr. Residence, Racine, WI). The decision was made to formalize the meetings and to create a non-profit organization, The Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy. In 1990, the first official Conservancy conference was held at Taliesin West in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Since the Conservancy's formation, its constituency has grown to include thousands of members and supporters worldwide. Membership is open to anyone interested in Wright, including architects, scholars, preservationists, architecture buffs, artisans and, especially, Wright building owners. Although many Wright structures are

designated National Historic Landmarks or are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, such designation does not guarantee that these structures are safe from homeowner disinterest and/or encroaching development. Other structures present preservation challenges beyond the financial means of their owners, placing a premium on the Conservancy's efforts as the only preservation organization concerned solely with the entire body of Wright's work. The establishment of the Conservancy's Lewis-Haines Revolving Fund in 2000,

through the very generous contribution of a Wright homeowner, has strengthened the Conservancy's ability to become more active and aggressive in the rescue of endangered structures. The Conservancy has played an integral role in the saving of a number of houses, including Auldbrass Plantation (1940, Yemassee, SC), the Allen Friedman House (1956, Bannockburn, IL), the Goetsch-Winckler House (1939, Okemos, MI), the Gordon House (1956, Wilsonville, OR), the Westcott House (1904, Springfield, OH), the Glasner House (1905, Glencoe, IL) and the Duncan House (1957, Lisle, IL).



**T**he primary focus of the Conservancy is advocacy to save Frank Lloyd Wright-designed structures from destruction. The three-person full-time staff, a corps of dedicated and knowledgeable Board members and volunteers accomplish the Conservancy's mission through six strategic initiatives:

- Advocating publicly and privately against demolition and neglect of Wright structures;
- Protecting Wright properties by accepting and monitoring legally enforceable preservation easements;
- Providing expert technical conservation and restoration advice and assistance to Wright property owners;
- Providing an international audience for sellers of Wright properties through *Wright on the Market* and helping owners find preservation-minded buyers;
- Introducing new audiences to Wright's work and the contribution of his architecture to American history and culture through an annual conference, periodic *Out and About Wright* events and the quarterly *Bulletin*; and
- Recognizing and honoring individuals and organizations that demonstrate extraordinary efforts in stewardship of Wright buildings or furtherance of the Wright legacy through the Conservancy's Wright Spirit Awards.

Frank Lloyd Wright designed more than 1,000 buildings. Over 500 of his designs were built, **ONE in FIVE** has been lost due to disaster, neglect or encroaching development.

## Some of the houses saved by The Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy



### Glasner Residence (1905) - Glencoe, Illinois

The Conservancy worked with realtors, preservationists and media to prevent the demolition of the Glasner House. Perched on a ravine leading to Lake Michigan, this important house sits on a prime, developable lot in a Chicago suburb renowned for tearing down older homes for new mansions. The house is now safe in the hands of a new owner and extensive restoration efforts are being undertaken.



### Westcott Residence (1904) - Springfield, Ohio

The Lewis-Haines Revolving Fund allowed the Conservancy to purchase the deteriorating Westcott House and sell it to a newly- formed foundation that has restored it and opened it as a house museum.



### Gordon Residence (1956) - Wilsonville, Oregon

The purchaser of the Gordon House and its 22-acre site was convinced to donate the building to the Conservancy rather than demolish it for new construction. The Conservancy attracted the interest of the Oregon Gardens, who purchased the house and moved it to its grounds. It now provides an aesthetic and educational experience to visitors.



### Friedman Residence (1956) - Bannockburn, Illinois

The Friedman House was saved from demolition at the last minute largely by publicity generated by the Conservancy, which led to the discovery of a new preservation-minded buyer.



### Goetsch-Winckler Residence (1939) - Okemos, Michigan

The Conservancy purchased this house out of mortgage foreclosure, again with the use of the Lewis-Haines Revolving Fund. This kept the house out of the hands of a developer and it is now in private ownership and well cared for.

The Conservancy works with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and many statewide preservation groups to address its preservation mission. Recent saves and publicity have catapulted the Conservancy into the international spotlight. This recognition enables the Conservancy to intervene earlier, more frequently and more effectively and to proactively conserve Wright properties that are not at risk by accepting and monitoring preservation easements. The Conservancy receives no public funding or any of the admission fees charged for Wright building tours. It is entirely member and donor supported.

Photos courtesy of Ron Scherubel

## How many Frank Lloyd Wright houses has The Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy actually saved?

This question is frequently asked, and it is difficult to answer. The actual saving of a threatened Wright property almost always involves significant publicity and a change in ownership.

Many saves are not readily apparent. For example, when the Conservancy finds a preservation-minded new owner for a property for sale through *Wright on the Market*, is this a save? If, without the Conservancy's involvement, the purchaser might have been a developer, or one insensitive to preservation, then the Conservancy's efforts clearly led to those houses being saved. There have been dozens of houses transferred to appropriate new owners through Conservancy generated publicity.

Additionally there are those properties where the Conservancy might not have been the channel that actually brought the new owner to the closing table, but where its intensive advocacy efforts were the mechanism that preserved the house's availability or prevented its demolition until that perfect buyer was found.



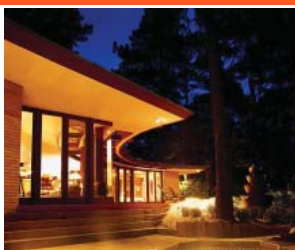
THE FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT  
BUILDING CONSERVANCY

**OUT AND ABOUT WRIGHT:** In 2008 the Conservancy began a new series called *Out and About Wright*. The series is comprised of events held at privately owned Wright homes across the country. Every event is unique, including cocktail parties, large house tours and intimate dinners. Aside from the format, each fundraiser is unique because of the ambiance each amazing home provides.



Attendees enjoyed the lake breeze and presentations at the Fred B. Jones Residence (1900) in Lake Delavan, Wisconsin. This afternoon of appetizers, drinks and tours was the first *Out and About Wright* event held during its inaugural year.

Photo courtesy of  
Ron Scherubel



The Andrew B. and Maude Cooke Residence (1953) in Virginia Beach, Virginia was the site for a wonderful evening of tapas, drinks, tours and presentations given by local academics and authors.

Photo courtesy of  
Jane and Daniel Duhl



Holiday cheer was in abundance at the Guy C. Smith Residence (1917) in Chicago, Illinois. Warm ambiance, holiday cookies and great conversation kept attendees out of the cold and in the spirit of the season.

Photo courtesy of  
Debra and David Nemeth

**THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE:** The Conservancy's biggest event of the year is its annual conference, held in a different location every year. Conferences typically span three to four days and address specific topics of interest in the Wright-world. Attendees view presentations by scholars, academics and authors. The conference's main attraction are its tours of Wright structures, both private and public, many architecturally significant buildings and homes in the area. Held in conjunction with the annual conference are a Silent Auction, the presentation of the Wright Spirit Awards and a Gala Dinner.

Annual conferences have been held since 1990. Recent venues included:



### 2008: Western Pennsylvania

Frank Lloyd Wright and the Roots of Sustainability. Highlights included an evening at Wright's magnificent Fallingwater, tours of Kentuck Knob, and the relocated Duncan House.

Photo courtesy of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

### 2007: Chicago, IL & Racine, WI

Frank Lloyd Wright:  
From Private to Public



Photo courtesy of Mark Hertzberg

2006: Southfield, MI  
Art, Craft, and Industry:  
Frank Lloyd Wright in  
Southeast Michigan



Photo courtesy of Cranbrook Archives

**SILENT AUCTION:** The Silent Auction is one of the most anticipated aspects of the annual conference. It is also the biggest fundraiser of the year. The success of this event relies on generous donations from companies, organizations and individuals around the world. The Conservancy seeks donations including Wright artifacts, books, art, furniture, jewelry and other items of value, as well as dinners at Wright homes



Photo courtesy of Matt Cline

**WRIGHT SPIRIT AWARDS:** The Wright Spirit Awards are the highest accolades given by The Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy to those individuals and organizations that demonstrate extraordinary efforts in the stewardship of Wright buildings or the furtherance of Wright's legacy. These awards are presented at the Conservancy's Annual Conference during the Gala Dinner. Recipients have been homeowners, architects, authors, Wright-enthusiasts and organizations that have gone above and beyond to support the Conservancy and its mission.

**BULLETIN:** The Conservancy's quarterly publication is a very popular resource sent to all members. Scholars, authors, preservationists and restoration architects contribute articles for this publication. The *Bulletin* features restoration articles, event information, announcements, book reviews and other items of current interest to the Wright community.



WRIGHT  
on the  
Market



THE FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT  
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**WRIGHT ON THE MARKET:** An important element of our mission is finding preservation minded owners for Wright homes that are currently listed on the market. To do this, the Conservancy features a listing of Wright properties for sale, on its website and in the quarterly *Bulletin*. The Conservancy has been extremely successful in matching preservation-minded buyers with sellers and assisting in the sale of more than 60 Wright properties.

## SAVE WRIGHT

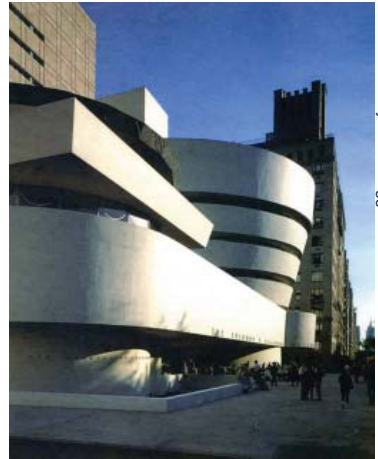
**WEBSITE:** The Conservancy website, [www.savewright.org](http://www.savewright.org), was redesigned in 2006, increasing the Internet traffic to over 30,000 visits per day. Savewright.org is regarded as one of the best Wright resources available online. It provides visitors with not only event and membership information, but a directory of Wright-designed homes for sale, a nationwide map of every Wright structure, Wright Chat and other important Wright information. The site has become a significant resource in fulfilling the Conservancy's mission and is a great way to keep in touch with Wright enthusiasts worldwide.

**WRIGHT CHAT:** Access to *Wright Chat* is obtained through the Conservancy's homepage. *Wright Chat* is open to any Wright enthusiast, member or not. This is a one-of-a-kind resource used for constructive Wright-oriented conversations. Discussions have centered around preservation, historical questions and restoration. This is a free service that promotes Wright awareness, preservation and unity among supporters. *Wright Chat* is also an important resource for the Conservancy as several preservation problems were first reported by *Wright Chat* users.

# CONSERVANCY SEEKS WORLD HERITAGE RECOGNITION FOR WRIGHT ARCHITECTURE

**WORLD HERITAGE:** One of the most significant projects ever undertaken by the Conservancy is its endeavor to obtain world-wide appreciation of Wright's architecture by nominating some of his most important works for inscription on the World Heritage List, maintained by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This list recognizes the most significant cultural and natural treasures worldwide. Of the 851 World Heritage sites in 140 countries, only 20 are located in the United States.

Supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the Conservancy convened a taskforce of eminent and independent Wright scholars to review the 400-plus extant Wright buildings and select those that best represent the scope, substance and unique qualities of Wright's architecture and exhibit universal significance. On February 1, 2008, the Conservancy was notified that its nomination of 10 Wright buildings had been selected by the secretary of the interior for the U.S. World Heritage Tentative List. This list contains the properties the United States will submit to UNESCO for World Heritage listing between 2009 and 2019.



Photos courtesy of the Guggenheim

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (1957)



Unity Temple (1904)  
Photo courtesy of  
Unity Temple Restoration Foundation



Price Tower (1952)  
Photo courtesy of  
Christian Korab, 2003



Frederick C. Robie House (1906)  
Photo courtesy of the  
Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust

The 10 Wright buildings included in its nomination are:

- Unity Temple (1904) Oak Park, Illinois
- Frederick C. Robie House (1906) Chicago, Illinois
- Hollyhock House (1921) Los Angeles, California
- Taliesin (1925) Spring Green, Wisconsin
- Fallingwater (1935) Mill Run, Pennsylvania
- S.C. Johnson and Son, Inc., Administration Building and Research Tower (1936, 1944) Racine, Wisconsin
- Taliesin West (1937) Scottsdale, Arizona
- The Price Tower (1952) Bartlesville, Oklahoma
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (1956) New York, New York
- Marin County Civic Center (1957) San Rafael, California



This will be an ongoing project of the Conservancy until the Wright buildings are successfully designated as World Heritage Sites.



## THE FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT BUILDING CONSERVANCY

The trademark of The Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy is a symbolic abstraction of the facade of the Larkin Administration Building in Buffalo, New York, designed by Wright in 1903. It was demolished in 1950 for a truck terminal that was never built. The lot remains vacant. The lost Larkin Administration Building is emblematic of the risks posed by the modern world to Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture.

**[WWW.SAVEWRIGHT.ORG](http://WWW.SAVEWRIGHT.ORG)**

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