



## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION – STAFF REPORT

### Landmark Hearing

**Address:** 609 Linden Ave (the MacArthur House)  
**Meeting Date:** December 10, 2020  
**Property Owner:** Anthony and Dietra Millard  
**Historic Designation:** Contributing Resource in the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District  
**Zoning:** R-1: Single Family



2006 Village photo

### Historic Preservation Ordinance

Relevant sections of the Historic Preservation Ordinance include the following:

#### 7-9-5: CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION OF HISTORIC LANDMARKS AND INTERIOR HISTORIC LANDMARKS:

A. The Commission, in determining whether to recommend for designation, and the Village Board, in determining whether to approve designation of particular sites, structures, or improvements as historic landmarks and/or interiors of structures or parts thereof as interior historic landmarks, shall consider the following criteria:

Historical And/Or Cultural Importance

1. Significance as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social development or heritage of the Village of Oak Park, the state, or the United States;
2. Location as a site of a historic event, with a significant effect on the Village of Oak Park, the state, or the United States;
3. Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social heritage, or other aspect, of the Village of Oak Park, the State, or the United States;

Architectural And/Or Engineering Importance

4. Existence on the National Register of Historic Places;
5. Embodiment of those distinguishing characteristics of significant architectural type, or style, or engineering specimen;
6. Identification as the work of a builder, designer, architect, craftsman, engineer or landscape architect whose individual work is significant in the development of the Village of Oak Park, the State, or the United States;
7. Contains design elements, detail, materials or craftsmanship that make the property or building structurally or architecturally innovative, rare or unique;
8. Representation of an architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social theme, style or period, expressed in distinctive areas, districts, places, buildings or structures that may or may not be contiguous.

B. Any site, structure or improvement that meets one or more of the above criteria shall also be at least fifty (50) years old and shall have sufficient integrity of location, design, materials and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation or restoration.

C. It shall be within the discretion of the Village Board to deny designation of any historic landmark, irrespective of whether or not the proposed landmark satisfies one or more of the above listed criteria. (Ord. 1999-0-7, 3-15-99)

**7-9-6: NOMINATION AND PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR DESIGNATION AS AN HISTORIC LANDMARK OR INTERIOR HISTORIC LANDMARK:**

A. Submission Of Nominations: Historic landmark and interior historic landmark nominations may be submitted to the Commission by any person, group of persons, or association, including any member of the Commission, on a nomination form provided by the Commission. The nomination form shall include, or be accompanied by, the following:

1. The name and address of the owner of the property proposed for designation, including the names of the beneficial owners of property held in a land trust, where possible.
2. The legal description and common street address of the property proposed for designation.
3. An indication of whether or not the owner is in favor of the proposed designation.
4. A written statement describing the property and setting forth reasons in support of the proposed designation.
5. Photographs of the property or selected properties within a district.
6. Such other information as may be required by the Commission.

## Applicant's Proposal

The applicant, homeowners Anthony and Dietra Millard, have nominated 609 Linden Ave to be an Oak Park Landmark based on the following Criteria:

**Criteria 1:** Significance as an example of architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social development or heritage of the Village of Oak Park, the state, of the United States.

**Criteria 3:** Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social heritage, or other aspect, of the Village of Oak Park, the State, or the United States.

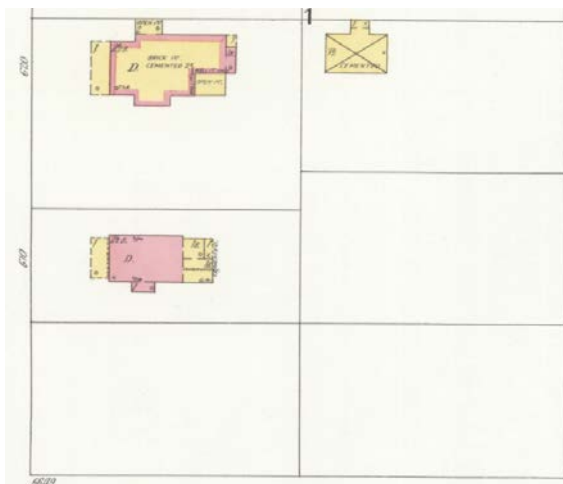
**Criteria 5:** Embodiment of those distinguishing characteristics of significant architectural type, or style, or engineering specimen.

**Criteria 6:** Identification as the work of a builder, designer, architect, crafts person, engineer or landscape architect whose individual work is significant in the development of the Village of Oak Park, the State, of the United States.

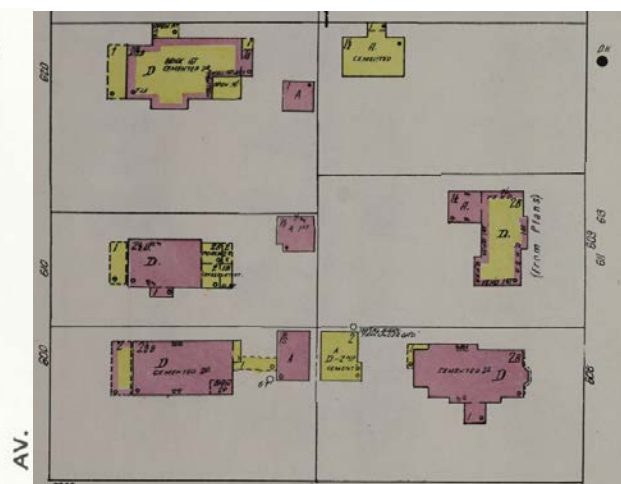
## Historical Summary

*The applicant has included two reports with detailed historical information; see attachments.*

The MacArthur House was designed by architects White & Weber and built in 1928 for original owner, William Telfer MacArthur. It was built on a 100x175 foot lot in the Fair Oaks subdivision. This is known as the "estate" section of Oak Park due to the size of the lots. The lot to the north with the coach house was added to the property by the second owner, Robert Borwell. The coach house was originally associated with 620 N Euclid Ave (the Todd House), which shares a rear property line with the MacArthur House. The Todd House was designed by prominent local architect E.E. Roberts and built in 1904. The coach house, originally a carriage house, was constructed between 1904 and 1908, and has architectural details consistent with the Todd House. It is likely that it was also designed by E.E. Roberts. The MacArthur House has had few alterations and retains its historic integrity. The interior was renovated in 1970, the coach house was restored in 1996, and a rear addition was completed in 1999.



1908 (coach house top right)



1947 (609 Linden middle right)

## Staff Comments

### Summary of Significance (full statement of significance attached)

609 Linden Ave (the MacArthur House) is part of the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District. The Historic District nomination notes the Prairie style houses in the district as well as “other excellent specimens of architectural styles from the Italianate residences of the 1860s to the revived Classical and Medieval types of the 1920s.” As a Tudor Revival style house, the MacArthur House not only illustrates the revival styles that followed the Prairie style in Oak Park, but directly illustrates the shift in architectural preference of architect Charles E. White, Jr. After working for Frank Lloyd Wright, White’s work was primarily reflected the Prairie style, but his designs shifted to more Classical revival styles into the 1920s. While Frank Lloyd Wright eschewed European revival styles, White work often seems to combine the Prairie and revival styles; notably, he was retained by Wright to be the local architect of record for the rebuilding of the Tudor-influenced Nathan Moore House in 1923.

While White designed many houses revival styles on his own, 609 Linden is one of just a handful of Tudor Revival houses (425 N East Ave, 220 E Euclid Ave or Cheney Mansion, and 420 N Euclid Ave) and 609 Linden is unique with its English Cottage references and large, asymmetrical gables. The MacArthur House is a rare example of a White & Weber designed residence. The other known buildings designed by White & Weber in the historic district are an apartment building at 24-32 Washington Blvd, a commercial building at 801-809 South Blvd, and the Post Office at 901 Lake St.

The MacArthur House is further representative of development in the “estate” section of Oak Park. The coach house now on the property previously served the Todd House (620 N Euclid Ave), an E. E. Roberts designed house which originally existed as a through-lot. The MacArthur House was originally built for Lawrence Telfer MacArthur (1891-1960), prominent businessman in Oak Park publisher of the *Oak Leaves*.

### Summary of Landmark Process

Anthony and Dietra Millard, the owners of the MacArthur House, filed all application materials for historic landmark status by November 1, 2020. On November 12, 2020, the Historic Preservation Commission considered the nomination and made a preliminary determination that 408 N Kenilworth Ave likely meets one or more of the landmark criteria. The Commission set December 10, 2020, as the date for the public hearing. A legal notice was published in the Wednesday Journal on November 25, 2020. The owners of 609 Linden Ave and the properties within 250 feet of 609 Linden Ave were notified by mail in accordance with the Historic Preservation Ordinance. All letters were mailed on November 24, 2020.

The HPC must vote, following the public hearing, on the eligibility of the MacArthur House. If the MacArthur House is found to meet the criteria, the HPC must provide a report and resolution recommending designation to the Village Board.

### Staff Recommendation and Landmark Process

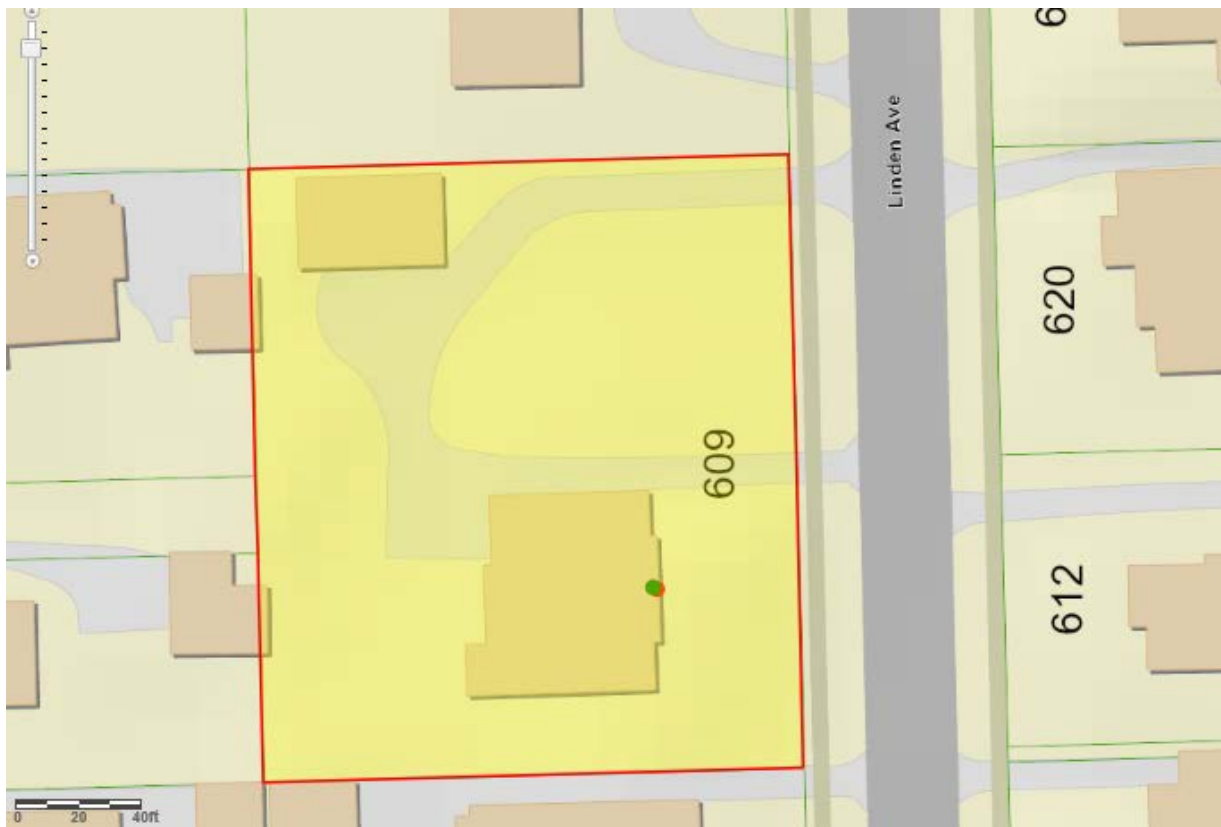
The MacArthur House is greater than 50 years in age and retains historic integrity. It appears to meet the criteria for eligibility to be listed as an Oak Park Landmark. It is recommended that the Commission

find the building to be an eligible landmark and approve a resolution recommending designation to the Village Board.

## Attachments

- Property map (added for 12/10/20 submission)
- Village photos
- Photos submitted by homeowners
- Landmark nomination form
- Statement of Significance and Criteria (prepared by staff and approved by homeowners)
- Wright Plus Report 2016 (supplied by applicant)
- Wright Plus Report 2004 (supplied by applicant)

Map of nominated property, including house and coach house, at 609 Linden Ave:



**Examples of Other White & Weber designs in Oak Park:**



901 Lake St (Post Office) (1933)



24-32 Washington Blvd (1924)



801-809 South Blvd



Charles E. White, Jr., was retained by Frank Lloyd Wright to work on the Nathan G. Moore House remodel (1923). The house is unique as Wright rarely referenced European architectural styles such as the Tudor style seen here in combination with the Prairie style. While White designed in the Prairie style, by the 1920s a majority of his buildings drew more strongly on the Classical Revival styles.

**Examples of Other Designs by Charles E. White, Jr.:**



420 S Clinton Ave (1905)



700 Columbian Ave (1912)



728 Columbian Ave (1921)



420 N Euclid Ave (1912)

**Village Photos of 609 Linden Ave:**



House (2002)





House (2006)



Coach house (2006)

Photos supplied by homeowners 2020



View of house



Coach house



Detail of crest on front bay window



View of house and coach house from the sidewalk

## MacArthur House

### Statement of Significance

The MacArthur House is notable as an example of the Tudor Revival style in Oak Park, as the only known residence designed by White & Weber within Oak Park's historic districts, and for its association with local businessman and *Oak Leaves* publisher, Lawrence Telfer MacArthur. The house reflects a transition within Charles E. White, Jr.'s work, and in Oak Park as a whole, from the Prairie style of Frank Lloyd Wright to the Eclectic Revival styles. While it carries through elements sought by Wright and the greater Arts & Crafts period, like simplicity and honesty of materials, it leans heavily on the European precedents that Wright shunned. The Victorian era styles, like Queen Anne, and the Eclectic styles are important in framing and showing the evolution of the ideas that emerged with the Prairie style. Due to his brief tenure working for Wright, White's designs are a notable microcosm of this evolution in taste.

### *Historical Summary*

The MacArthur House was designed by architects White & Weber and built in 1928 for original owner, Lawrence Telfer MacArthur. It was built on a 100x175 foot lot in the Fair Oaks subdivision. This is known as the "estate" section of Oak Park due to the size of the lots. The lot to the north, also 100x175 feet, with the coach house was added to the property by the second owner, Robert C. Borwell, who was a prominent Oak park resident and a key shareholder in the First Oak Park Bank & Trust in the 1950s-60s. The coach house was originally associated with 620 N Euclid Ave (the Henry Todd House), which shares a rear property line with the side lot. The Todd House was designed by prominent local architect E.E. Roberts and built in 1904. The coach house, originally a carriage house, was constructed between 1904 and 1908, and has architectural details consistent with the Todd House. It is likely that it was also designed by E.E. Roberts. The MacArthur House has had few alterations and retains its historic integrity. The interior was renovated in 1970, the coach house was restored in 1996, and a rear addition was completed in 1998.

### *Tudor Revival style*

The MacArthur House is a notable example of the Tudor Revival style as it developed in Oak Park. The Tudor Revival style was trending nationally in the 1920s: an estimated 25% of houses built in that decade were in the Tudor Revival style. Local variations based on the preferences of local architects are common. Characteristic of the style, it draws on early English building traditions as well as the contemporaneous Craftsman style and Arts & Crafts period. The MacArthur family coat of arms is centrally located on the bay window, a detail common in English country houses of this period. The multiple asymmetrical gables, arched doorway, grouped metal casement windows, decorative stone elements, paired stucco and brick cladding, and large, decorative chimneys are all key design elements of the MacArthur House that were typical of post-1920 Tudor Revival houses.

## *White & Weber*

The MacArthur House is the only currently known single-family residential design by White & Weber in Oak Park. The two other known buildings designed by the firm are the Post Office (901 Lake St) and a commercial building at 801-809 South Blvd. Charles E. White, Jr. was more prolific in the area, and alone designed three buildings that are Oak Park Landmarks (the Cheney Mansion of 1913, the Charles W. Helder House of 1906, and the Oak Park and River Forest Day Nursery of 1929). He joined Frank Lloyd Wright's studio in 1903 and started his own practice in 1905. His early work, such as the houses at 309 N Elmwood Ave and 818 Fair Oaks Ave, reflect the Prairie style, but he made a clear shift into the Eclectic styles in the 1910s and 1920s, including the Tudor Revival, Georgian Revival, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman styles.

## *Lawrence Telfer MacArthur*

Lawrence Telfer MacArthur (1891-1960) was a prominent businessman in Oak Park. He was the publisher of the *Oak Leaves* and the chairman of Pioneer Press, which published weekly newspapers in other Chicago suburbs including Winnetka and Glenview. He served in both world wars, was the first president of the Oak Park Rotary Club, and served as president of the Oak Park Chamber of Commerce. Lawrence was the younger brother of John D MacArthur whose foundation with his wife Catherine T has an endowment of nearly \$8 billion.

## **Criteria for Designation**

According to Section 7-9-6(B) of the Oak Park Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Historic Preservation Commission must make a preliminary determination of eligibility after receiving a nomination. A determination of preliminary eligibility must be based upon a finding that there is a likelihood that a nominated historic landmark will meet one or more of the "Criteria for Designation" set forth in Section [7-9-5](#) of this Article.

The MacArthur House was nominated under the following criteria:

- (1) Significance as an example of the architectural development or heritage of the Village of Oak Park;
- (3) Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social heritage of the Village of Oak Park, the State, or the United States;
- (5) Embodiment of those distinguishing characteristics of a significant architectural style;
- (6) Identification as the work of an architect whose individual work is significant in the development of the Village of Oak Park, the State of Illinois and the United States;

In addition, the property is at least 50 years old and has sufficient integrity of location, design, materials and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation or restoration.

**Anthony J. Millard, MD**  
**Dietra D. Millard, MD**

*609 Linden Avenue  
Oak Park, Illinois 60302*

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*Email: [opajm@hotmail.com](mailto:opajm@hotmail.com)*

*Home Phone (708) 445-0233*

*Cell Phone (708) 516-0516*

*Fax (708) 445-0516*

To: Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission

From: Anthony J and Dietra D Millard

Home owners: 609 Linden Avenue  
Oak Park, IL. 60302



Enclosed is our application for Landmark status of our home at the address above. This home was originally built in 1928 for Telfer MacArthur, then was owned by Robert C Borwell until 1995, when we purchased it from Robert's widow, Naomi Borwell.

We are seeking landmark status for this home, which has been featured on the Wright Plus tours twice, in 2004 and again in 2016. Information obtained by the research captains for these walks, Mr Jeff Petertil and Mr Patrick Cannon, is included in the application.

Please let us know if there is additional information needed for a successful application.

Thank you all for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.



**HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION FORM**

The Village of Oak Park  
Village Hall  
123 Madison Street  
Oak Park, Illinois 60302-4272

708.383.6400  
Fax 708.383.6692  
TTY 708.383.0048  
village@oak-park.us

This form is for use in nominating Oak Park Landmarks. Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets. Use a type-writer, word processor or computer to complete all items.

**NAME OF PROPERTY**

TELFER MACARTHUR HOUSE  
Historic name Common name

**LOCATION**

609 LINDEN AVE.  
Street & number

Oak Park Illinois IL Cook 031 60302  
City or town State Code County Code Zip code

**CLASSIFICATION**

**Ownership of Property** (Check as many boxes as apply)

Private  Public: Local  Public: State  Public: Federal

**Category of Property** (Check only one box)

Building(s)  District  Site  Structure  Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

\_\_\_ Contributing \_\_\_ Noncontributing

2 Buildings \_\_\_ Sites \_\_\_ Structures \_\_\_ Objects \_\_\_ Total

**Type of Designation**

Exterior  Public interior

**FUNCTION OR USE**

**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC  
Category Subcategory

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC  
Category Subcategory

**DESCRIPTION**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

TUDOR REVIVAL  
Category Subcategory

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

CONCRETE SLATE BRICK/STUCCO  
Foundation Roof Walls Other

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Areas of Significance

Period of Significance

Architect/Builder

WHITE AND WEBER

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

PLEASE SEE ENCLOSED MATERIALS

**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

PLEASE SEE ENCLOSED MATERIALS

**Representation in Existing Surveys**

SAME

**Legal Description** (Attach additional pages if necessary)

SAME

<b>Form Prepared By</b> ANTHONY J. MILLARD	<b>Official Action</b>
Name/Title 708-445-0233	Date of Owner Consent
Telephone 609 LINDEN AVE.	Date of Public Hearing
Street & Number OAK PARK	Result
City or Town IL	
State 60302	
Zip Code	
<b>Property Owner(s)</b> ANTHONY J. AND DIETRA D. MILLARD	
Name 708-445-0233	
Telephone 609 LINDEN AVE.	
Street & Number OAK PARK	
City or Town IL	
State 60302	
Zip Code	Date of Village Board Action
<b>Applicant</b> ANTHONY J. and DIETRA D. MILLARD	Result
Name 708-445-0233	
Telephone 609 LINDEN AVE.	
Street & Number OAK PARK	
City or Town IL	
State 60302	
Zip Code	
Signature <i>[Signature]</i>	Date



**Anthony J. Millard, MD**

609 Linden Avenue  
Oak Park, Illinois 60302

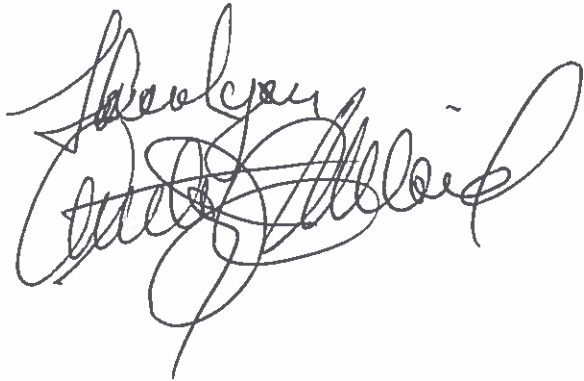
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Email: [opajm@hotmail.com](mailto:opajm@hotmail.com)

Home Phone (708) 445-0233  
Cell Phone (708) 516-0516  
Fax (708) 445-0516

The owners of the 609 Linden Ave. residence are:

Anthony J. Millard  
Dietra D. Millard

Handwritten signatures of Anthony J. Millard and Dietra D. Millard. The signature of Anthony J. Millard is written in cursive and is positioned above the signature of Dietra D. Millard, which is also in cursive and more stylized.

# PLAT OF SURVEY

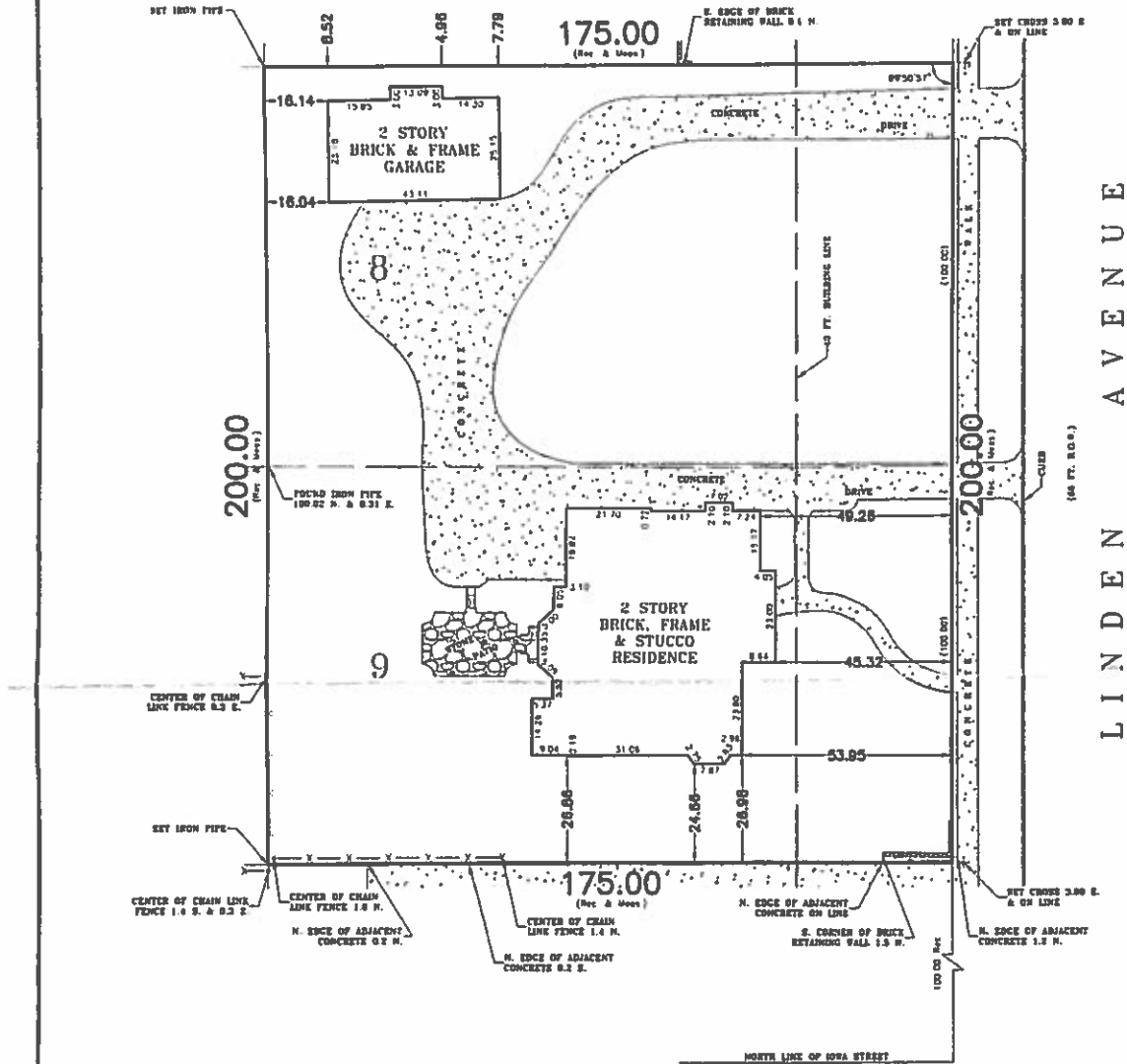
of

LOTS 8 AND 9 IN BLOCK 3 IN FAIR OAKS, A SUBDIVISION OF THE SOUTH HALF OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 6, TOWNSHIP 30 NORTH, RANGE 13 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, IN COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

ADDRESS: 809 LINDEN AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS



SCALE: 1"=30'



### GENERAL NOTES:

- 1) THE LEGAL DESCRIPTION HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY THE CLIENT OR THEIR AGENT.
- 2) THIS SURVEY SHOWS THE BUILDING LINES AND EASEMENTS AS INDICATED BY THE RECORDED PLAT. THIS PLAT DOES NOT SHOW ANY RESTRICTIONS ESTABLISHED BY LOCAL ORDINANCES UNLESS SUPPLIED BY THE CLIENT.
- 3) BASIS OF BEARING FOR THIS SURVEY IS AS THE NORTH ARROW INDICATES, AND IS SHOWN TO INDICATE THE ANGULAR RELATIONSHIP OF THE BOUNDARY LINES.
- 4) MONUMENTS, IF SET, DURING THIS SURVEY, REPRESENT THE TRUE CORNERS OF THIS DESCRIPTION AS SURVEYED.
- 5) LOCATION OF SOME FEATURES MAY BE EXAGGERATED FOR CLARITY. NO EXTRAPOLATIONS MAY BE MADE FROM THE INFORMATION SHOWN HEREON.
- 6) ONLY COPIES WITH AN ORIGINAL SIGNATURE AND SEAL ARE OFFICIAL LEGAL DOCUMENTS. ALL SURVEYS ARE COPYRIGHTED MATERIALS WITH ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
S.S.  
COUNTY OF COOK )

SURVEY ORDERED BY: ANTHONY J. MURGARO

PREFERRED SURVEY, INC. DOES HEREBY STATE THIS PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONFORMS TO THE CURRENT ILLINOIS MINIMUM STANDARD FOR A BOUNDARY SURVEY. PROPERTY CORNERS HAVE BEEN SET OR NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH CLIENT'S REQUEST. DIMENSIONS ARE SHOWN IN FEET AND DECIMAL PARTS THEREOF AND ARE CORRECTED TO A TEMPERATURE OF 68 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF THE PROFESSION OF SURVEYING  
3RD DAY OF MARCH 2008



Professional Design Registration #184-002705

**PREFERRED SURVEY, INC.**

7045 W. 79TH STREET, BRIDGEVIEW, IL, 60455  
Phone 708-458-7845 / Fax 708-458-7855  
www.psisurvey.com

Field Work Completed 10/02/08 FLD CREW CD/RS



# Research Report

**Wright Plus 2016**

**Telfer MacArthur House**

**609 Linden Avenue**

**Oak Park, Illinois**

**White & Weber, 1928**

**House Captains: Helen Reid, Michael Lavery, Elena Cincione**  
**Research Chair: Patrick F. Cannon**

## **Acknowledgements**

First I would like to thank the house captains for the MacArthur House, Helen Reid, Michael Lavery and Elena Cincione. They have been a pleasure to work with. I can say the same for my bosses, Research Chairs Bill Kundert and Doug Kaarre, who were unfailingly helpful and responsive to my needs. Wright Plus Coordinator Angela Whitaker and Curator and Director of Interpretation for the Frank Lloyd Wright Trust David Bagnall, did their best to find previous research for the house, but, alas, the full research report from 2004 was nowhere to be found.

But Jeff Petertil, who was research chair in 2004, came to my rescue when he was able to locate a draft of his final report. To say that this report was exhaustive is to give Jeff less than his due. I confess that I would not have gone to the lengths Jeff did in uncovering details about the two families who lived in the house before the current owners, Drs Anthony and Dietra (Dee) Millard. The Millards were obviously as helpful to Jeff then as they have been to this year's team. Without our wonderful home owners, there would be no Wright Plus, so our gratitude is profound.

While my own report will not include all of Jeff's research, a copy is now safely ensconced in the house file at the Trust's Research Center.

Patrick F. Cannon  
Wright Plus 2016 Housewalk

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## Statement of Significance

The design of the Telfer MacArthur House was based on the ideas and designs of the Arts & Crafts movement, a design philosophy that attempted to change the face of architecture and decorative arts in England beginning in the 1850s. The writer and critic John Ruskin (1819-1900) provided much of its intellectual basis, with his championing of the Pre-Raphaelite painters, and promotion of a return to a simpler, pre-industrial lifestyle. In architecture and decorative arts, his most notable disciple was William Morris (1834-1896)<sup>1</sup>, a wealthy Englishman who encouraged a return to more native and vernacular forms, meant to replace the Palladian and Classical Revival styles that were widely used then for public buildings and private homes. His own home, the famous Red House, 1860, designed with architect Philip Webb, is an early example of the style, which was carried forward by others, most notably Charles F.A. Voysey (1857-1941)<sup>2</sup>, who, like Morris, was a noted designer of wallpaper, fabrics and other decorative items; and Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944)<sup>3</sup>, perhaps Britain's most famous architect of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, who later designed the Viceroy's Palace and other government buildings in New Delhi.

The (mostly) country homes they designed were based on vernacular forms found in farm houses and out buildings, and country houses from the Tudor era and before. Multiple gables, sometimes decorated with half-timbering, were a common element, as was the use of local materials, such as locally-quarried stone, brick made from local clays, and plaster (or stucco, as we would call it). Windows tended to be of uniform size and multi-paned.

The Telfer MacArthur House is an excellent example of the type, with its two prominent gables, use of brick and stucco, and its multi-paned windows, including a typical two story Tudor bay. The style is fairly common in Oak Park and River Forest; indeed, it is still being used for new construction today.

The Arts & Crafts philosophy was also influential in the development of two, more strictly American, styles: the Prairie style of Frank Lloyd Wright and his followers, and the Craftsman, promoted in the magazine of the same name by Gustaf Stickley and others. Perhaps the most famous of the latter is the Gamble House in Pasadena, California, by Greene and Greene. One of the architects of the MacArthur House, Charles E. White, actually worked for Wright for a time and designed some houses in a more pure Prairie mode, but eventually found the English style more congenial. While Wright's architecture moved on to a more purely American expression, his furniture continued to reflect the Arts & Crafts style.

Although its architecture is quite pleasing, the most prominent feature of the house may well be the family of its first owner, Telfer MacArthur. Although a successful publisher and businessman in his own right, he was the brother of John D. MacArthur, much of whose fortune was left to the John D. and Catherine MacArthur Foundation, which annually awards the now famous "Genius Grants." Another brother, Charles, was the newspaper man and playwright, whose most famous play, written with Ben Hecht, was *The Front Page*, which was later adapted into film no fewer than three times.

## The Residence

### Exterior

The original house was built on a 100x175 foot lot in the Fair Oaks subdivision, a section of Oak Park with larger than typical building lots and larger than typical homes. Because of this, it is sometimes referred to as the “Estate Section.” There are six houses designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in the immediate vicinity: Rollin Furbeck (515 Fair Oaks), Edwin Cheney (520 N. East), Harry Goodrich (534 N. East), William Fricke (540 Fair Oaks), William Martin (636 N, East) and Harry Adams (710 Augusta). In addition to Wright and White & Weber, other notable architects represented in the area include Talmadge & Watson, George W. Maher and John Van Bergen, among others. The house directly to the south, the Skinner House, was designed by White in 1911.

The MacArthur House is set back on the lot, and originally was approximately 60 feet wide by 26 feet deep, with the exception of a 20x24 foot attached garage at the northwest corner, and the back porch, which originally extended an additional eight feet into the gardens on the opposite (south) side. Materials are brick and stucco, with stone used for the front door surround and other small accents. There are two prominent gables, one of brick and one of stucco. The stucco gable has a two-story pulpit bay, with the MacArthur family coat of arms in copper, with the words “Fide et Opera,” translated as “fidelity and work.” The form of the bay is essentially Tudor. Numerous English country houses of the Arts & Crafts period have similar bays, but usually much larger and serving a single, high-ceilinged room.

The rest of the windows are multi-paned steel casements and vary in overall size, but the panes themselves are a uniform 8x10 inches. The living room windows have



small decorative crests, but most of the rest are plain. Both gables are on the east façade; the second floor slightly overhangs the first, supported by decorative brackets below.

The main entrance is off center, with the door inset in an arched vestibule. This is also typical of English models, as is the arched foyer within.

While perennial and annual flower plantings are, of course, subject to yearly change, there are some trees on the property worth attention. Many were planted by former owner Robert C. Borwell, who loved trees. There is a copper beech at the south front of the house that tree specialists have called one of the finest in the region. The back yard features a katsura, and a linden in the center of the island. The large elms in the parkway were likely planted before the house was built and have thus far escaped Dutch elm disease.

### **Interior**

The foyer is the main circulation space for the first floor (the second floor is not on the tour). It has a shallow vaulted ceiling that reflects the vaulted vestibule. With the exception of the library, all the main rooms were originally accessible from it. To the right is the kitchen, with the dining room directly facing the entrance and the living room to the left. The staircase to the second floor is directly to the left. Its modest size is the antithesis of the grand staircases that were such a feature of large country homes (see Highclere, site of *Downton Abbey!*). While Wright moved on from Arts & Crafts, this is one feature of the style that he generally retained, preferring to give the space to the main rooms.

The living room is spacious, approximately 24x16, with a large window facing east, and a slightly larger bay window to the south. The library, approximately 13x13, is

in the southwest corner, accessible from the living room. Both rooms have stone fireplaces, with oak surrounds. Originally, French doors led from the living room to a flagstone terrace. The dining room, approximately 16x16, also had a view to the rear gardens. Trim throughout is relatively narrow oak.

The house, as built, had a full basement, likely unfinished. In addition to the usual utilities, it now includes a media room and a guest bedroom. According to the building permit, the estimated construction cost of the house was \$35,000<sup>4</sup>.

### **Changes**

As would be expected, minor changes were made over the years. In 1969, parquet flooring was installed in the foyer and dining room, and butternut (a kind of walnut) paneling was installed above the living room fireplace. Oriental-themed wallpaper, still there today, was hung in the dining room. The second owners had an elevator installed in the library to assist a family member with multiple sclerosis in getting to the second floor.

The current owners are both physicians. The husband is a keen amateur pianist, and when they were looking for a house in 1995, they hoped to find one with a room large enough to accommodate in-home recitals. Finding none, they bought the MacArthur House because there was sufficient room at the rear to permit construction of a sizeable addition. Having very specific ideas, they worked with Chicago architect John A. Wilson to accomplish them.

The result, finished in 1999<sup>5</sup> is a beamed and vaulted space of approximately 24x40 feet, two steps down from the main house, with stairs to the lower level at the south end. French doors provide access from both the dining and living rooms. At its southwest corner is a 9x12 foot sunroom, whose west wall extends slightly into the

garden. The west wall of the main space features windows providing a view of the back gardens. Their design reflects those in the original house.

As noted, the original lot was 100x175 feet. The second owner, Robert Borwell, purchased the lot to the north, which was vacant except for a coach house at its rear, originally part of the Henry Todd House (E.E. Roberts, 1904) at 620 N. Euclid, the next street to the west. The property now has a 200 foot frontage, permitting the extensive landscaping seen today. The coach house is now generally used as a guest house. During a 1996 renovation by the current owners, a photo was discovered which showed that horses were stabled on the ground floor, which also included space for a carriage.

### **Unique Contents**

The furnishings in the living and dining rooms are mostly English Georgian; the dining chairs, for example, appear to be Chippendale reproductions. The drapery fabric was purchased by the owners in India, and then sewn locally. Important period maps are hung throughout the main rooms; evidence of the owner's collecting interest. Included are originals by Mercator and Ortelius dating to the 16<sup>th</sup> century

The music room accommodates two pianos, a standard Kawai grand and a Bosendorfer Imperial Concert Grand that has 97 instead of the usual 88 keys, thus permitting an additional octave. Other highlights of the room include a Steuben Glass Composer's Bowl (names of famous composers are etched into the surface), set in a lighted alcove, and an inlaid table from India (to which the owners have travelled extensively, including medical missions). In the style of the Taj Mahal, it is set with 15,000 pieces of semi-precious stones, including lapis lazuli, mother of pearl, carnelian and turquoise. Built-in bookcases were executed by the Wood Place of Oak Park.

The new basement space is essentially a museum of sports memorabilia, with the focus on Chicago teams and athletes. It includes baseballs, bats, footballs, helmets, and the uniforms of such worthies as Stan Mikita, Gale Sayers, Ernie Banks, Walter Payton, Michael Jordan, Dick Butkus – well, you get the idea!

### **The Architects**

Charles E. White, Jr. and Bertram Weber formed a partnership in 1923, with White as the senior partner<sup>6</sup>. It continued until 1936, when White died<sup>7</sup>.

White (1876-1936) was born in Lynn, Massachusetts, to Charles E. White, Sr., and his wife Agnes Elizabeth Safford. He was a male line descendent of Revolutionary War soldiers William Loud and Michael Porter<sup>8</sup>. According to his biography in the *Book of Chicagoans*<sup>9</sup>, he attended the Art Museum School in Boston and completed a special course in architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was first employed by S.J. Brown in Boston, where he became chief draftsman.

In 1897, he joined the Boston branch of Swift Brothers Meat Packers as an architect, where he designed various buildings for them in New England. From there, he moved to Philadelphia, where he designed similar buildings for the American Gas Company.<sup>10</sup>

In 1903, he joined Frank Lloyd Wright's studio. Before he left Wright's studio, he wrote a series of letters to friend Walter Wilcox that are a valuable window into the workings of the studio in those years<sup>11</sup>. (Samples are included in the Exhibits.) Interestingly, he married Alice May Roberts, the daughter of one of Wright's early champions, Charles E. Roberts, who was instrumental in getting Wright the commission to design Unity Temple.

White began his own practice in 1905. Some of his early designs were clearly influenced by Wright's Prairie designs, but in time he explored other styles, including the English Arts & Crafts of the MacArthur House. He practiced alone until 1912, when with Charles Christie he formed White & Christie.

Three of his buildings are Oak Park Landmarks: the Cheney Mansion of 1913, the Charles W. Helder House of 1906, and the Oak Park and River Forest Day Nursery of 1926. Perhaps his best known work is the Oak Park Post Office of 1933, a fine example of Art Moderne. He was also retained by Wright to be the local architect of record for the rebuilding of the Nathan Moore House in 1923.

He was a prolific writer. In addition to being a regular contributor to the *Ladies Home Journal*, he wrote several books, including *The Bungalow Book*<sup>12</sup> and *Successful Houses and How to Build Them*<sup>13</sup>. Quite active in the community, he was a charter member of both the Oak Park Country Club and the River Forest Tennis Club, which he helped design with fellow members Frank Lloyd Wright and Vernon Watson. He was also responsible for Oak Park's zoning laws, the first in Illinois, and for encouraging the setting aside of land for parks.

Another interest, particularly during the Depression years of the 1930s, was the provision of low cost, sanitary, comfortable and pleasing housing to replace Chicago's many slums. Although not completed until after his death in 1936, he worked with architects Hugh Garden, Tallmadge & Watson, E.E. Roberts and Hubert Burnham on Julia Lathrop Homes, along the east side of the Chicago River near Diversey Parkway. Landscaping was by Jens Jensen. The complex is, as of this writing, being slated for redevelopment by the Chicago Housing Authority.

His partner, Bertram Weber (1898-1989) was born in Chicago, but grew up in Evanston. His father, Peter, was a German-born and educated architect who worked for Daniel Burnham for most of the 1890s before opening his own practice. His son received a liberal arts degree from Northwestern University, then an architectural degree from M.I.T. While he worked part time for his father while attending Northwestern, Bertram didn't join his firm after graduating from M.I.T., instead working for Howard Van Doren Shaw until forming his partnership with White. In addition to the aforementioned Oak Park Post Office, they designed the Haish Memorial Library in DeKalb and the Rudolph Pabst House in Winnetka.

He practiced on his own after White's death in 1936, until his son John, an engineering graduate of Princeton, joined the firm in 1973. Among his most notable commissions were the Florsheim Shoe and Dr. Scholl factories, several Episcopal churches, and public schools and the public library in Highland Park, where he lived for many years. He was elected to the Fellowship of the American Institute of Architects in 1953.

(Additional background on the architects is available in the Exhibits section.)

## **Family Information**

### **Original Owners**

Lawrence Telfer MacArthur (1891-1960) was born in Pennsylvania to itinerant Baptist preacher, William Telfer MacArthur. (He preferred to drop his first name.) Telfer was prominent in Oak Park as publisher of the *Oak Leaves*, whose importance in the community can scarcely be imagined today. Prior to the internet, anyone interested in buying or renting in Oak Park had to buy a copy, since locals rarely advertised available

real estate in the Chicago papers. The *Oak Leaves* also chronicled the governmental and social activities of Oak Park on a weekly basis. In addition to the Oak Park paper, Telfer also became chairman of Pioneer Press, which also published similar weeklies in other western and northern suburbs, including the interestingly named *Winnetka Talk* and *Glenview Announcements*. (The chain has changed hands several times, and is now owned by Tribune Publishing.)

He was married three times. His first wife, Hazel, died in 1922. He married Ruth Decker in 1925. She was a widow, whose parents owned the James R. MacMaster House a block or so away at the southeast corner of Iowa and Euclid. They divorced in 1953, when he married Elizabeth Otis, who survived him. According to his *Oak Leaves* obituary, he served in military intelligence in both world wars, achieving the rank of lieutenant colonel on General Eisenhower's staff in World War II<sup>14</sup>. He was the first president of the Oak Park Rotary Club, and served as president of the Oak Park Chamber of Commerce.

While a local celebrity, he was somewhat overshadowed by his three brothers, Alfred, Charles and John. His eldest, Alfred (1885-1967), was successful insurance man and banker in Chicago, and a friend and sometimes financial advisor to Frank Lloyd Wright. In fact, he was the first renter of the Wright home after Frank left, and actually tried to buy it in 1915. Their friendship continued for many years.

Charles, who lived with Alfred in the Wright home for a time, became a highly successful newspaper man, playwright and screen writer. His most successful play, written with Ben Hecht, was *The Front Page*, which was later adapted for three movies, perhaps the most famous *His Girl Friday*, in which Rosalind Russell turns the original

male Hildy character into a female foil for Cary Grant's Walter Burns. He also had a great success with *Twentieth Century*, set aboard the famous train. Oh, and by the way, he also married Helen Hayes, America's most famous stage actress of her time. (As this was being written, a revival of *The Front Page* was announced for the fall 2016 Broadway season, to star Nathan Lane, John Slattery and John Goodman, among others.)

Equally famous was his youngest brother, John D. MacArthur (1897-1978), head of Bankers Life and Casualty, and one of America's richest men when he died. He left behind one of the country's largest foundations, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, which is perhaps best known for its annual "Genius Grants," which provides no strings attached cash to individuals in the arts and sciences.

Finally, it should be mentioned that Telfer worked with his architect, Charles White, in compiling the names of Oak Park and River Forest men who had served in World War I. Both are listed, as well as Telfer's brothers Alfred and John, and, of course, Ernest Hemingway. (See Exhibits for additional information.)

### **Subsequent Owners**

Robert Carne Borwell, Sr. (1902-1989) bought the house from MacArthur in 1934 and the family owned it until the current owners bought it in 1995. A graduate of Dartmouth College, until his retirement in the early 1960s he was an executive of Marsh & McLennen, one of the country's largest insurance brokerages. A noted philanthropist, the playground of the Oak Park and River Forest Day Nursery (designed by White & Weber) is named after him, as is the Robert and Naomi Borwell Research Building at the Dartmouth Medical School. He was also a life trustee of the Presbyterian-St. Lukes Medical Center<sup>15</sup> (now Rush University Medical Center). He made one of the three gifts



to the fledgling Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation (now the Frank Lloyd Wright Trust) that enabled it to meet a funding deadline set by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. (See Exhibits for additional information.)

As mentioned, the current owners are Drs. Anthony and Dietra (Dee) Millard. Their medical volunteer work in India, financed by them, including Dee's helping Mother Teresa to establish a home for children suffering from AIDs, is fully in keeping with the public service that has been common to the house's three owners. Finally, the musical activities of the Millards are also consistent with the artistic interests of the MacArthur and Borwell families.

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<sup>1</sup> Thompson, E. P., *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*. Stanford University Press, Palo Alto. 1988

<sup>2</sup> Gebhard, David., *Charles F.A. Voysey, Architect*. Hennessey & Inglalls, Inc. Los Angeles, 1975

<sup>3</sup> Inskip, Peter (and others). *Edwin Lutyens*. Rizzoli International Publications, Inc. New York, 1979

<sup>4</sup> Building permit, Village of Oak Park, July 19, 1928.

<sup>5</sup> Building permit, Village of Oak Park (to come)

<sup>6</sup> Interview by Betty J. Blum with Bertram Weber, August 4, 1983, for the Chicago Architects Oral History Project, Burnham Library, Art Institute of Chicago

<sup>7</sup> Obituary, *Oak Leaves*, 1936

<sup>8</sup> *Sons of the American Revolution* magazine, volumes 1-4, p. 35

<sup>9</sup> Albert Nelson Marquis, ed. *The Book of Chicagoans: A Biographical Dictionary of Leading Men and Women of the City of Chicago*. Chicago. A.N. Marquis & Company 1911

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Smith, Nancy K. Morris. *Letters, 1903-1906, by Charles E. White, Jr. from the Studio of Frank Lloyd Wright*. *Journal of Architectural Education*, Vol. 25, No.4 (1971), pp. 104-112

<sup>12</sup> White, Charles E. Jr. *The Bungalow Book*. Macmillan Company, New York, 1923

<sup>13</sup> White, Charles E. Jr. *Successful Houses and How to Build Them*. Macmillan Company, New York, 1912

<sup>14</sup> Obituary, *Oak Leaves*, February 4, 1960.

<sup>15</sup> Obituary, *Oak Leaves*, March 1, 1989.

W. J. Telfer  
Res Capt  
May 2004

## **Introduction and Significance**

The Telfer MacArthur house at 609 N. Linden Avenue was designed by the architectural firm of White and Weber and built in 1928. It will be one of the featured homes on the Wright Plus house tour in Oak Park on May 15, 2004. While many of the homes on the 2004 tour have been included before, this will be the initial time for the MacArthur house. This paper summarizes research on the house, with commentary on the influence of the architect and the three families who have occupied the house.

The architecture of the Telfer MacArthur House mixes vertical and horizontal lines, organic and historic styles into a house whose owners have filled their homes with individual features and community spirit. Its street frontage of 200 feet is among the widest in Oak Park and today offers a splendid display of flower gardens and mature trees. Its human stories show that local roots are strong but bear fruit in far off places.

One or two degrees of separation connect the Telfer MacArthur House with Dwight Eisenhower, Dick Butkus, Cary Grant, the Taj Mahal, the Fortune 500, Michael Jordan, Susan Sarandon, concert music, Ivy League medical research, a variety of peony, Hawaii Five-O, tomorrow's medical care, and, yes, Frank Lloyd Wright and much Oak Park history.

As a brief overview, the MacArthur house was designed in the English revival style by Charles E. White, who apprenticed with Frank Lloyd Wright and practiced in Oak Park for over thirty years. Telfer MacArthur, who was involved in Oak Park through the local newspaper and commercial developments, commissioned the home. MacArthur's older brother was a close friend of Wright's and his two younger brothers continue to be remembered nationally today, one as a playwright and the other as a philanthropist. But MacArthur only lived in the house for six years before selling it to a young native Oak Parker, Robert Borwell, who was embarking on a successful business career and would own the home for 55 years until his death in 1989. His widow, Naomi Borwell, sold the home in 1995 to a physician couple, Anthony and Dietra Millard, who have traveled widely and redesigned the home to suit their own cultural interests.

The home that will be open for the house walk is rich in exterior and interior design as well as human-interest stories. Let's start with the architecture and the architect and then connect the owners with the house and their community.

## **The 1928 Architecture**

The Linden Avenue facade of the Telfer MacArthur house displays the English revival style that became popular in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s. Within that style were elements characteristic of Gothic, Tudor and Elizabethan architecture, all in the medieval English building tradition. The MacArthur house features steeply-pitched slate roofs and dominant front-facing gables. The slate roof is the original roof. In the cross-gabled plan, the second gable to the north is set back and overlaps the first. Both stand out visually because of the contrast between the facing material of stucco in the setback

gable and the brick and stone of the entry gable. Other characteristics of the English revival are a façade combining brick masonry, stone and stucco, a principal entry door recessed within an arch, several tall multi-pane windows, a large chimney (on exterior right) and another chimney in the left interior.

Other elements add to a look and feel derived from an English country cottage. The term "cottage" is used not to mean a humble house, but rather the country home of the well-to-do urban resident that would romanticize the Tudor or Elizabethan period. A variant of the English revival, the cottage style does not exhibit the half-timbering associated with Tudor architecture. The south part of the façade that is not gabled has a second story level projecting over the first story. Below this mantel overhang are corbels (or brackets), with particularly elaborate ornamentation below the southeast corner.

In addition, there are tall casement multi-pane windows, narrow high gable windows, some stone in each lower corner of the predominantly brick entrance gable, stone quoins on the northeast corner running from the foundation to the roof line (making transition from stucco on the front gable façade to brick on the north side wall), the large exterior chimney on the north, multi-color bricks, with some protruding bricks randomly placed on the north wall. This uneven brickwork may be meant to give the rough organic feel left by medieval tradesmen, as opposed to the reality of twentieth century mass-produced pieces.

The windows on the façade vary in size and number of panes, but all of the panes are of a uniform shape (maybe ten inches high and eight inches wide). Thus, although there are 36 panes in the two-story entrance gable window by the interior stairway, only three in the high gable window, and varying numbers in the other windows, the consistency of the pane size gives an overall integrity to the façade. This uniformity of window treatment was common to the English revival home.

Gothic and medieval touches are also seen in stained glass crests in the living room windows, and a crest or family seal ("Fide et Opera", the motto on the MacArthur coat of arms, meaning "fidelity and work" or "faith and work") in copper on the exterior of the pulpit bay. The two-story copper-roofed pulpit bay window, on the stucco gable set back to the right, is an unusual but noteworthy feature. Notable by its absence is half-timbering, often seen in the Tudor revivals.

Also, a full basement is unusual for cottage style. The basement is hidden, however, in the front view by landscaping that rises gently to the front door and first floor elevation. The FLW historic district guide describes the entryway as a Tudor arch (although that term is usually applied to an arch that comes to a peak, whereas this one is rounded). The attached garage with an entry via driveway, but unseen from the street, probably was uncommon at the time and remains that way today.

Tudor revival homes often had an asymmetry to the façade and roof line, which seemed to result from side rooms set back and with a lower roof line than the main part of the house. Some of this may have been from Victorian and Queen Anne asymmetry. On the

south part of the façade of the MacArthur house, there is no side room, but, nonetheless, the roofline breaks and goes lower by about two feet when south of the living room chimney. This seems otherwise unnecessary (and possibly unwise) but may have been included by White to match rooflines of this style. From the rear of the building, this looks less like a break, with a gable peak at that point.

### **Site And Neighborhood Context**

The lot is extra wide, 100' by 175', as is typical for the Fair Oaks subdivision. The main axis of the original home (before recent addition) was parallel to the street and the house was not particularly deep, in contrast to most on the block. The FLW historical district guide indicates that "Land in this area north of Chicago Avenue was developed after World War I" but this seems untrue, since most of the lots had been built on by then.

This lot, however, remained undeveloped until 1928. The James Fletcher Skinner home, directly to the south and fronting on Iowa, rather than Linden (although the Skinner house address is 605 Linden), was built in 1911 and included the MacArthur lot, where there may have been a tennis court. Telfer MacArthur purchased the lot in May 1928 and a building permit were issued on July 19 of that year (for 613 Linden, although 609 is the current address). The cost was estimated at either \$25,000 or \$35,000, depending on how one reads the scratched numbers on the permit.

Charles White designed the Skinner house and, 17 years later, in designing the MacArthur home, he may have matched some features to the earlier home. Looking south from the middle of the block, the line between the first floor dark brick and second floor light stucco of the MacArthur house runs almost directly into the line between the first floor dark brick and second floor light stucco of the Skinner home. Otherwise, the houses are quite different in exterior.

At the other end of the MacArthur house, the mostly-stucco north front gable follows the mostly-stucco facade of the coach house set back on the lot to the north of the MacArthur house. This coach house was originally part of the Henry Todd estate and has many of the features of the house seen behind it to the west, the Todd house at 620 N. Euclid, designed by E. E. Roberts in 1904. The coach house was presumably built then, but the lot was conveyed to Clarence Funk in 1912. Apparently, the coach house was used but nothing was ever built on the rest of the lot facing out to Linden. In 1944, title to the lot (lot #8) was taken by Robert Borwell, who had purchased the MacArthur house (lot #9) in 1934.

For sixty years then, these two lots have been under common ownership; the street frontage is therefore 200 feet. There is much open lawn but also considerable low shrubbery near the house and gardens in back. Along the driveway to the MacArthur garage in the rear, a walkway to the main arched entrance has the effect of a low stone wall. The MacArthur house included a garage in the original building, with a paved drive back to it. The drive now continues to the coach house and then turns back along the north lot line to Linden.

The landscaping of the property is impressive, from the Bradford pear trees along Linden Avenue to the woods at the back end of the property. The current owners say the effect from the second floor of the coach house is akin to being in a tree house. The FLW historic district guide states that the noted landscape architect Jens Jensen developed plans for the Skinner property, plans now held by the Morton Arboretum.

We have evidence that Mrs. MacArthur was an avid gardener. Robert Borwell brought in many trees and plantings and the back west end of the property now has a wooded effect. In front of the house, note the large copper beech to the south and the redbud to the north. Also towards the front of the property are several magnificent elm trees, which the present owners take major precautions to protect from disease. Among the trees at the back are a Japanese maple and a Katsura tree.

### **Interior Plan And Interior Design**

Interior characteristics vary from a lengthy entry hall that leads to many areas of the rest of the house to new contemporary rooms added by the current owners, all tied together in a tasteful manner. It is worth noting that, in contrast to most Oak Park houses situated on north/south streets, the axis of the original house extends north/south, so that the building permit application shows breadth 62', length 29', with an area used of 2038 square feet.

The entry hall runs north/south and, therefore, at right angles to the east/west entry axis. The low archway of the exterior entrance carries into a low interior entryway. The front door just clears a compact light fixture that the Borwells transferred from a family farmhouse near Frankfort, Michigan. The low arch entrance reflects the English revival style and is echoed in the hallway entrances to the living room and to the kitchen area. While the floor plan does not follow any typical pattern, it might be considered radial, in that from the front entrance one can turn right to the kitchen, ahead to the dining room, left to the living room. A hard right would take you to the powder room and a hard left leads up the stairs to the second floor.

Within the entry hallway that runs perpendicular to the entrance door, interior archways are to the left and right but not to the dining room directly ahead. The dining room entrance is squared off, with double doors, and the dining room itself has a more formal English feel than the rest of the interior, with a large chandelier, white wainscoting matching the molding, and gold wallpaper. The living room with its multi-paned windows accented by the stained glass of medieval scenery, relatively low ceilings (9') and fireplace paneled to the ceiling adds to the effect. The remodeled kitchen might also be said to have a country sense, with a light open feel, walnut cabinets, and parts of the flooring in slate as well as hickory. There is a large stove and shield venting to the exterior chimney. The center chimney results in fireplaces in both the living room and the library, with screens for both that were designed especially for this house by a prominent metal worker/fireplace company in Chicago called Hoops.

The predominant wood used in the interior doors and woodwork on the first floor is oak, although the fireplace mantel in the living room is butternut. The dining room table and

chairs, plus the altar table in the dining room are mahogany, as is a round drum table in the living room. There are oak beams in the library.

The second owner added an elevator to the library for his first wife when she developed multiple sclerosis. In 1969 there was a major remodeling of the interior and among the features added were the butternut paneling above the living room fireplace, parquet floors and the dining room wallpaper. The current owners, the Millards, are the third owner and added a large room at both the first floor and basement level in the last ten years. The large room on the first floor was designed to serve as an acoustically sensitive entertainment and recording space for classical music. At the same time, this music room is architecturally impressive, well illuminated by natural light in the day and artificial light at night. The ceiling treatment, gradually raised over the piano area, includes dark oak beams sympathetic to the Tudor style but also includes skylights.

The Millards were looking to buy a house with a large space to serve as a music room. When they realized they would probably have to add such a room to an existing home, they found few properties that would allow the sizable addition they wanted. The MacArthur house, with its deep backyard and central axis parallel to the street, served that purpose. This major addition, which was to take six months, was completed after two years and nine months, but fits very well with the original house.

In this room today are important furnishings, including a limited edition Steuben glass Composer's Bowl displayed in a lighted alcove and a table from India that is white marble, inlaid with 15,000 miniature pieces of semi-precious stones, including lapis lazuli, malachite, mother of pearl, carnelian, and turquoise, in the exact style as the Taj Mahal. The centerpiece of the room is the large Bosendorfer concert grand piano from Vienna that was the first of its kind in a Chicago area residence. The smaller Kawai piano has been in the owner's possession for thirty years.

Antique maps dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century are displayed throughout the first floor and include the work of early cartographers such as Abraham Ortelius, Gerhard Mercator, and Petrus Bertius. Visitors will also see carpets from China, India, and Turkey and additional furnishings gathered in travels to India and the Far East, including a natural rosewood altar table in the entry that was acquired on a recent visit to China.

The music room has French doors leading back to both the living room and dining room. The west wall in the concert area includes windows and doors looking out onto the yard through multi-pane glass matching the size of those throughout the original house. To the south is a sitting area with an outdoor covered porch to the west. Also south, an east wall features a built-in floor-to-ceiling book cabinet of about 15 feet in length designed around the original windows that remain in the library and once looked out to the garden. The oak piece was executed by Bill Sieck of the Wood Place in Oak Park and matches bookcases on the north end of the room that Dee Millard had previously obtained. At the far south are stairs leading down to a sports room.

The basement sports room features Chicago sports memorabilia displayed in built-in cabinets and display space constructed by Bill Sieck. The autographed uniforms and sports equipment are displayed around a room containing a pool table and wet bar. Featured in this room and an adjoining basement room that is part of the original house are sports jersey from most of the prominent Chicago professional heroes of the last few decades. When the Millard's now-college-age son was young, he and his father Tony acquired a baseball jersey worn and autographed by a White Sox rookie, Frank Thomas. Intrigued, they started a collection of Chicago uniforms that now displays jerseys of Sammy Sosa, Stan Mikita, Gale Sayers, Ernie Banks, Walter Payton, Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen, Dick Butkus, Mike Singletary, and Bobby Hull. Brian Urlacher's may soon debut and Frank Thomas awaits a comeback. There are also autographed balls and other memorabilia, including souvenirs from playoffs and the Olympics.

### **Architect**

White and Weber. Bertram Weber and Charles E. White had a partnership from 1923 to White's death in 1936. White's work in Oak Park dates back to 1903 and most of the homes attributed to him predate his partnership with Weber, so after a paragraph about Weber, this section concentrates on White. Research on Weber has not turned up any information on Oak Park work attributed to Weber alone.

Charles E. White Jr. (1876 – 1936) worked in Frank Lloyd Wright's studio from 1903 to 1905 and then established his own practice. Born and raised in Lynn, Massachusetts, he came to the Midwest as a young man, married Alice Roberts, the daughter of Charles Roberts, one of Frank Lloyd Wright's earliest patrons, and seems to have lived with Alice in Oak Park until his death in 1936 at age 60. There are quite a few of his houses in the area and he is mentioned in most books about the Frank Lloyd Wright Historic District. One of his last commissions, the main Oak Park Post Office on Lake Street, was dedicated 6 days after his death.

White wrote extensively. He succeeded Robert Spencer in writing for "The Ladies Home Journal" but also wrote for "House Beautiful". He wrote a number of books on houses and two were used as texts at the University of Illinois and elsewhere – "Successful Houses and How to Build Them" (1912, MacMillan) and "The Bungalow Book" (1923, MacMillan). In the former book (p. 32) he shows his admiration for English architecture in a chapter on architectural styles: "Nowhere in the wide world will you find more beautiful houses than in England. In no other land will you find houses situated in the midst of such beautiful grounds or designed in greater harmony with their surroundings. English country houses seem to blend into the landscape. They have the appearance of being indigenous to the soil, as all houses should, and in gazing upon them one feels they are entirely successful. Every prospective house-owner should study the characteristics of the quaint English houses nestling down in the midst of trees and flowers, that he may secure some of their charm for his own home."

Fran Martone, writing in the H&S monograph, "In Wright's Shadow", says that White was sympathetic to Frank Lloyd Wright's rejection of historic styles but quotes him from

a 1904 letter: "I am just as strongly determined to ... recognize all that is beautiful, however it may be expressed." White's letters show him to be charming and witty. In 1905, he wrote to a mentor in Vermont about all the time he was putting into studying for an architectural license, since "... in Illinois, architects and dogs have to be licensed." (A few years before, Illinois became the first state to require licenses for architects.)

Oak Park-related biographies say he graduated from MIT in 1895 but this was not acknowledged by some 1990 correspondence with MIT to Lisa Schenk of the Home and Studio. White's biography in the Withey and Withey *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects* is based on a letter from Bertram Weber. It indicates White took a special course in architecture at MIT but attended the Art Museum School in Boston.

In Oak Park, White was quite involved in community affairs, being a charter member of the Oak Park Country Club and River Forest Tennis Club. He collaborated with fellow club members Wright and Vernon Watson in the design of the tennis club building, originally built at the north west corner of Harlem and Lake, which was moved to its Lathrop Avenue address in 1920. Charles White was a captain in the reserve militia during World War I, serving in Lakehurst, New Jersey. He returned to Oak Park to become a key participant in the building boom that Oak Park experienced in the 1920s. His obituary in the *Oak Leaves* notes that he consented to be the commissioner of public works for a year and, in response to an Illinois law authorizing municipalities to create building zones, worked up Oak Park's first zoning laws, which were widely admired and also the first in the state. Earlier he had been instrumental in recognizing the need for park land in Oak Park and creating the park district.

Although fifteen years older than Telfer MacArthur and 26 years older than Robert Borwell, Charles White probably was on friendly terms with both before they were in this house, having collaborated with MacArthur on an Army/Navy roster in 1918 and being a member of Grace Episcopal church (White designed the parish house and rectory), which was also Borwell's church. Reading the 1936 *Oak Leaves* obituary of White, with its insights into White's contributions to the Oak Park community, and knowing of Telfer MacArthur's work at the *Oak Leaves* and his own contribution to the post-war boom in Oak Park, it is easy to believe that it was MacArthur penning the tribute to a friend whose sudden death had an impact on many in the community.

A little something should also be mentioned about White's father-in-law. In 1905, Charles E. Roberts was the head of the rebuilding committee for the Oak Park Unitarian congregation whose church had just burnt down. Roberts championed Frank Lloyd Wright, whereas the pastor wanted a white, steepled, New England type church but ended up with Unity Temple. That his son-in-law had been working for Wright may have had an impact, but Roberts' home at 321 N. Euclid had already been remodeled by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1896. Wright's mother, Anna, was a strong Unitarian and it appears the Roberts relationship was initially stronger with her than her son. (Some sources note that Frank Lloyd Wright's secretary, Isabel Roberts, was a daughter of C.E. Roberts or a sister-in-law of Charles White, but they seem to be unrelated. White wrote extensive



chatty letters to a mentor in Vermont, often mentioning his wife Alice or "Father Roberts", but never mentioning Isabel as a family member.)

### **Other commissions of Charles E. White**

White's Oak Park houses are of many different styles, with our house as one of the latest in point of time. In her 1973 Ph.D. thesis, "The Domestic Architecture of Oak Park, 1900-1930", Elizabeth Dull devotes considerable attention to White (pp 90 -107) and lists two pages of House Beautiful articles (pg 170), although none after 1920. She does devote a chapter to the revivalism after 1920, but chooses architects other than White to emphasize for that period. She does not mention the house at 609 Linden, although she does mention others in the immediate area, including the Skinner house at 605 Linden of White's design.

She concludes (p. 107), "... the influences...are varied... Certain characteristics may be cited as common: a preference for starting to design from a basic rectangle, the use of varied window sizings and groupings, the variation of wall surfaces through projected and recessed areas, and the simplification of entrance areas. ...it is in the larger houses that his fine sense of proportion is most evident. White's designs were always original solutions whether in the progressive manner or historical in style, and a number of his houses show him to have been an architect of the first rank."

A commentary in the Hasbrouck & Sprague survey of 1974 says that White's homes before 1915, while not "...Early Modern, do not relate to any historic architectural styles. They seem closest to the English cottage, that to a degree was converted into an early modern style during the 1890s by the English architect Voysey." It goes on to say rectilinear modern might be a more apt label.

The strong asymmetry of the front façade of the MacArthur house is unusual for White, but he did have an affinity for English revival, although usually more along the manor house style seen in the Sharpe-Cheney (220 N. Euclid), Seabury (420 N. Euclid), Fahrney (400 N. Euclid), and Camp (701 N. Columbian) houses.

White worked in Frank Lloyd Wright's studio from shortly after he came to Chicago in 1903 to 1905. His letters of that time to a mentor back east are lively and often used as source material for those writing about the prairie school era of Wright's career. White was clearly eager to start on his own and his 1905 houses, notably the C.S. Austin home at 420 S. Clinton, show the influences of Wright, but even the earliest one, the C.E. Simmons house of 622 N. Kenilworth, leans more to the rectangular frame that he was often to favor. Elizabeth Dull points out (p. 93) that White often would vary his facades by alternating recessed and projected areas. He certainly did that in the MacArthur house.

White may also be the only architect associated with the Prairie School who had one of his own homes remodeled by Frank Lloyd Wright. The 1905 Walter Gerts home at 7214 Quick Avenue in River Forest, just across Harlem Avenue and the Oak Park border, was

featured in Hermann von Holst's 1913 book, *Modern American Homes* (now available from Dover under the title, *Country and Suburban Homes of the Prairie School Period*), with White listed as the architect (plate 27). (The Skinner home also made it into this book on plate 93, along with another small White home on plate 63 that I have not been able to place.) But in 1911, the home had been remodeled by Wright following a fire and the floor plan displayed in the book may already have been altered.

White's love of the English historic style, his ambition and prolific writing, and his family relationship with the early Wright patron, C. E. Roberts, combine for my speculation that Charles White, no matter how much he may have learned from Frank Lloyd Wright in his few years in the studio, was never one to have carried the Wright architectural message very far as a disciple. Of course, the English revival style that White eventually favored is more disciplined than the eclecticism of Queen Anne and high Victorian designs being built all around him when White started practice. But if White was ever torn between English historic form and Wright's organic approach, the die was probably cast by Wright's community behavior in the years when White began raising an Oak Park family.

First, there is evidence that Wright owed Roberts considerable amounts of money (see Secrest, p180, 376) and White must have known about that. Second, Secrest quotes White's daughter, Elizabeth Johnston, on the Mamah Cheney affair, "It was the most awful scandal that ever happened. I was very young and they tried to keep it from me...but it really finished him in Oak Park." She says her mother, Alice Roberts White, felt Wright got involved "because he never had 'a bit of sense' about women" (p. 206.) So, for Charles White, who had a nice life and practice in Oak Park near his in-laws, it may have been occupationally suicidal to include too many prairie elements in his designs. Nevertheless, one thinks White did not endear himself to Wright by asking in a 1911 letter for Wright to send any disgruntled clients his way.

At the same time, we can only regret these circumstances that turned an able practitioner and frequently published writer like White from Wright's influence. Hard-working and with a community spirit that made him influential in Oak Park for thirty years, White might have carried the Prairie banner for a quarter of century after Frank Lloyd Wright left town. Instead, in his writings from 1910 to 1918 about architectural styles, he "showed no preferences, implying thereby that all were appropriate for the home". (H. Allen Brooks in *The Prairie School*, p.115.) In the previously mentioned chapter on styles in his book, White does not mention the organic Midwestern architecture that was all around him in Oak Park. Interestingly enough, in the years before his death, White was turning his attention to designing inexpensive quality housing for the poor at about the same time Wright was moving to his thoughts about Broadacre City and Usonian houses. But that may always be the impact of economic depressions on thoughtful architects.

## Client

Telfer MacArthur (1891 – 1960) was heavily involved with the main Oak Park newspaper of the time, the *Oak Leaves*. The guidebook to the FLW historic district says he was an early publisher. His obituary in the *Oak Leaves* is less specific, saying he was long prominent in the publishing field, the guiding spirit of *Oak Leaves* and had the title of president until 1951, as well as being chairman of the board for Pioneer Publishing, which owned several other community newspapers. It states that during the 1920s he was a leader “in the development of the Lake-Marion-Harlem shopping district, which became one of the greatest outlying districts in the Chicago area.” He was the first president of the Oak Park Rotary club and a president of the Oak Park Chamber of Commerce.

Although MacArthur seems to have lived much of his life in Oak Park, he also does not seem to have stayed in one place long. Oak Park phone books list him at the *Oak Leaves* offices from at least 1919 to at least 1935 but the home addresses in those years are several. The 1919 listing is a 44 Washington Boulevard; the 1922 listing is 152 N. Scoville; then from 1923 – 1927 he is listed at 637 N. Euclid, a block away from the Linden Avenue property that was built in 1928. The home at 637 N. Euclid is one of the larger neoclassical houses in Oak Park, the 1896 George C. Page house. If MacArthur owned this home at age 33, it shows he had prospered financially. He also would have been aware of the open yard on Linden behind the Skinner house, which in 1921 had been sold to a Mabel Wilkinson, and aware of the architectural skills of Charles White. In 1928 the house designed by White for him was built, complete with the MacArthur coat of arms in copper relief on a front gable.

1928, the year the Linden Avenue house was built, was also the year when his younger brother Charles had success with the Broadway debut of his play *The Front Page* and married the actress Helen Hayes. In 1929, Telfer was added to the board of the Oak Park Trust bank (in 1941, Robert Borwell would become a board member). In 1936, MacArthur’s daughter Jean was married to Gustave Babson, Jr., whose family owned two Tallmadge and Watson homes of architectural distinction in Oak Park, one at 412 Iowa built in 1906 and a larger one at 415 Linden built in 1913.

Telfer MacArthur was married three times. His first wife Hazel died in 1922. From 1925 to 1953, he was married to Ruth Dicker, and in 1953 he married Elizabeth Otis, who survived him. The obituary mentions two daughters, Jean and Dorothy.

According to his *Oak Leaves* obituary, Telfer MacArthur served in the U.S. Army military intelligence in both World Wars, reaching the rank of major in World War I. Upon his return to Oak Park, he edited and helped publish an Army and Navy roster of Oak Park and River Forest men who served in the Armed Forces in the war with Germany. His two co-editors were Charles E. White, Jr. and Otto McFeely, another journalist involved in the *Oak Leaves* and community affairs. (McFeely, who would be a pallbearer at White’s funeral, was the original owner of a 1905 Vernon Watson house at 645 Fair Oaks, next door to Watson’s own 1904 Prairie style home.)

In the Second World War, MacArthur served as a lieutenant colonel on General Eisenhower's supreme headquarters staff in Europe. He was active in Republican politics at both the state and national levels and served as treasurer of a committee organized by William Wrigley for the election of Herbert Hoover. This was in 1928, the year the Linden Avenue house was built and Hoover was elected president as a popular progressive Secretary of Commerce with few ties to political reactionaries.

The *Oak Leaves* obituary states that, "He lived for many years on Linden Avenue in the village." Title records, however, show title passing to Robert Borwell in 1934 and a 1941 *Oak Leaves* article states that Borwell lives at 609 Linden. Oak Park phone books show Telfer MacArthur residing at 200 S. Maple in 1934 and 1935. (We also have an intriguing real estate ad from 1988 listing Telfer MacArthur as one of the previous owners of the house at 532 Fair Oaks, where John Van Bergen grew up.) By 1940, however, he is listed in the phone book of Libertyville, Illinois, about twenty five miles north of Oak Park. His property there on Old School Road was a large one, near that of his brother Alfred and the Frank Lloyd Wright house built for Lloyd Little, another journalist.

MacArthur had three brothers, all of whom achieved prominence. The youngest, John (1898-1978), was the most financially successful, leaving behind at his death the fortune that sustains the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Charles (1895-1956) was a journalist and playwright, famous for *The Front Page* and his marriage with Helen Hayes (1900 – 1993), the "First Lady of American Theater". Their son James is an actor known for appearances in movies (*Swiss Family Robinson*) and television (*Hawaii Five-O*). Charlie MacArthur's play *Twentieth Century* is currently on Broadway with a revival starring Alec Baldwin and Anne Heche. The New Yorker review cites the screwball comedy from 1934 where "the two hilariously act out society's battle between collapse and abundance."

I find four movies made from the play *The Front Page*, the most famous of them being *His Girl Friday* with Rosalind Russell and Cary Grant in 1941, where one of MacArthur's two male leads becomes Rosalind Russell. But in 1931 it had been filmed as *The Front Page* with Adolph Menjou and Pat O'Brien and was remade in 1974 with Walter Matthau and Jack Lemmon (Carol Burnett, Charles Durning, and Susan Sarandon also had roles). Most recently, the genders and title were again switched and the setting was no longer a newspaper but a TV station for the 1989 movie, *Switching Channels*, with Burt Reynolds, Kathleen Turner, and Christopher Reeve. In "Many Masks", Brendan Gill mentions that the reporter who covered the Mamah Cheney murders at Taliesin in Wisconsin was probably the same one whose last name (Burns) Charles MacArthur and Ben Hecht used for the editor character in "The Front Page".

The oldest brother, Alfred (1885-1967), was financially successful as an insurance man and connects to Frank Lloyd Wright in several ways. He was one of the first renters of the Wright home after Wright left, attempted to buy the Home from Wright in 1915, and was someone who Wright relied on for financial advice both in Wright's Oak Park days and into the 1940s. Alfred and a sister, Margaret Wiley, may also have been involved in

the *Oak Leaves*. We know that Charles MacArthur listed his address as the Home for at least a short period during World War I and that both Charles and John are listed in the war memorial in Oak Park's Scoville Park. Charles White is also listed, as is Robert Borwell's older brother and Ernest Hemingway. Interestingly enough, Telfer MacArthur is not listed.

In her biography of Wright, Meryl Secrest notes the financial assistance and advice that Alfred gave to Frank Lloyd Wright. Jim MacArthur believes that Wright designed a house for Alfred and his wife Mary, but that Mary found fault with the design and Wright would not change it to suit her. Secrest also notes that Charles MacArthur and Helen Hayes socialized with the Wrights at the time the Lloyd Lewis house in Libertyville was built in 1941. Since Charles' had two brothers living in the immediate vicinity, it would certainly make sense he would be visiting the area. Alfred also had a home in Cuernavaca, Mexico that prompted Helen Hayes to buy a place nearby after Charles died. Such stories about visits within the family increase the likelihood that all the MacArthur brothers and Helen Hayes visited the Telfer MacArthur house in Oak Park.

The orientation of the MacArthur home, with the long axis parallel to the street, rather than perpendicular to it, allows for private space in the back. According to the American Peony Society, there is a peony variety named after Mrs. Telfer MacArthur in 1940, so the home may have been designed on the north/south axis to allow plenty of room for back yard gardening.

#### **Later owners of the building:**

Robert Borwell bought the house from MacArthur in 1934 and his family owned it until the current owner purchased it in 1995. During that time, the Borwells purchased the lot to the north with the coach house, modernized the house, and added considerably to the landscape. There were extensive modernizing changes in 1970 that added air conditioning and updated other features throughout the house. In the later years, however, the Borwells were not in the house most of the year. The current owners are then just the third owners and have made major additions.

Robert Carne Borwell Sr (1902 - 1989) was a native Oak Parker whose mother's family, the Carnes, owned one of the early farms in the Ridgeland area, on what is now the east side of Oak Park. The original 1870 farmhouse still stands, with a current address of 144 N. Cuyler. There is also an old farm building remaining in the east-west alley between Cuyler and Ridgeland, behind Lickton's Bicycle and the old Blase's grocery. This farm was in existence even before had Oak Park had a train stop (1872) and the population of 500 was centered around Harlem Avenue. Neighborhood legend has it that the Carnes built the three houses north of the Carne farmhouse. At any rate in all the Oak Park directories from 1895 to 1935 (and possibly before and after), there is a Frank Borwell listed at 162 N. Cuyler, the northernmost of those three homes, a tall Victorian "painted lady". That is where Robert Borwell grew up and went through the Oak Park schools.

Borwell graduated from Dartmouth College and joined the Marsh and McLennan insurance brokerage in Chicago, retiring as a senior vice president and director in 1967.

The company had been started in 1871 after the Chicago Fire and was incorporated in 1923, about the time Borwell joined. The company went public in 1962, shortly before he retired. Today Marsh & McLennan has 60,000 employees around the world, \$1.5 billion in profits in 2003, and a market value at 3/1/2004 that ranked it 88<sup>th</sup> among the Fortune 500 companies, right behind the Ford Motor Company.

Borwell was connected by marriage and business to other prominent families in the Oak Park area. His first wife, Mary Vette, was the grand daughter of Susan Fahrney Pratt Beachy, owner of the Frank Lloyd Wright home at 238 Forest. Her parents were Elsie Pratt and John Lyle Vette, who lived in the house at 308 Forest, just south of the Heurtley house. At some point, Elsie Pratt Vette moved to 611 N. Euclid, just behind the house at 609 N. Linden, and lived there until her death in 1953. Mary Vette Borwell died in 1969 after a long illness. Mr. Borwell died in 1989. His second wife and widow, Naomi Borwell, sold the Linden Avenue house in 1995, as it had been lived in only infrequently in the years before the sale.

For much of Borwell's employment, March & McLennan was headquartered in Chicago, although it later moved to New York City. During part of its Chicago period, the chairman of Marsh and McLennan was Charles Ward Seabury of Oak Park. Both Seabury and Emery Fahrney, the brother of Susan Beachy, had homes built in 1912 in the 400 block of North Euclid and designed by Charles E. White.

Robert Borwell, Charles Seabury, John Vette and Peter Beachy all had property in Michigan in the northwest part of the Lower Peninsula and were prominent in the Crystal Lake Yacht Club of Frankfort, Michigan. The Seaburys and Borwells were supportive of that community as well as the Oak Park community and it was at his farm near Frankfort that Mr. Borwell died in 1989. His second wife and widow, Naomi Borwell, sold the Linden Avenue house in 1995, as it had been lived in only infrequently in the years before the sale.

Robert Borwell was involved in philanthropy, particularly related to medical research, and Oak Park civic affairs; the playground of the Oak Park & River Forest Day Nursery (1139 W. Randolph) is named for him. The Day Nursery building itself, designated as an Oak Park Landmark, was designed by Charles White in 1926 and is an English revival building in the Tudor style. The Borwell philanthropy also is responsible for the Robert and Naomi Borwell Research Building at Dartmouth Medical School. In 1975 when the embryonic Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Trust needed a large infusion of cash to meet a deadline set by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as a support goal, it was Bob Borwell who pledged one of the three major gifts. Those who enjoy the Wright Plus house tours every May might be glad the gift was not slightly larger. The house walk was initiated that year to raise the remainder of the goal.

The current owners of the Telfer MacArthur house, Drs. Dietra and Anthony Millard, have made impressive additions and renovations to the house. They added the large music room to the west (where a porch and terrace had been) in the late 1990s. Below the new room a sports room was added at basement level. A new kitchen was created at

the north end by combining the original kitchen, two adjacent pantries, and the breakfast room into one larger kitchen area in 2000. The Millards interests are shown through various furnishings and collections on display (furnishings gathered in travels to India and the Far East, antique maps, concert pianos and recording equipment, sports memorabilia) and mentioned in the Interior section of this report. In recent years the Millards have accompanied Oak Park River Forest High School groups on trips to India to share their love for travel with the next generation. Frank Lloyd Wright designed two homes for a Millard family, but Dr. Millard doubts that these were relatives of his.