

**Statement by Landmarks Illinois
to the Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission**

**regarding 931 Chicago Avenue - proposed removal of additions
on the east and south elevations to diminish footprint and
allow for visitor flow (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of
Architecture Historic District).**

July 11, 2019

Good Afternoon,

My name is Lisa DiChiera, Director of Advocacy for Landmarks Illinois.

Anna's House at 931 Chicago Ave. is considered one of the oldest homes in Oak Park, built circa 1866, and first occupied by Frank Lloyd Wright's mother from the time Wright built his home next door. In reviewing the 1895 Sanborn map of this historic home, it appears that the east wing proposed for demolition had already been added with all of the components identified by the Frank Lloyd Wright Trust's consultant.

The south addition appears to have been added between 1895-1905, and one could therefore assume that Wright was involved in its construction on behalf of his mother.

In our view, the loss of these wings would eliminate another layer of Wright's and his family's history on this property and his mother's and his sister's years of occupying the historic home.

We disagree with the Trust's consultant that the home is "not architecturally noteworthy." It is a contributing property to the historic district, which has a period of significance that ends at 1940. Its additions fall within the district's period of

significance and are also historic.

Standard 4 of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation states:

Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

When the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service review rehabilitation projects seeking to use federal historic tax credits or other tax incentives, later additions and changes within the period of significance must be retained.

Returning Anna's House to its original 1860s footprint is not appropriate in this instance, as the additions that pre-date 1905 are an important part of the evolution of this very important historic property.