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Residential Real Estate

Prairie-style architect's Oak Park home and studio sell fast

By Dennis Rodkin



The former home and studio of a noted Oak Park architect, filled with handsome Prairie-style details, sold quickly and for more than the sellers' asking price.

The Superior Street home where prolific architect E.E. Roberts lived and worked in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, sold Aug. 31 for \$1.3 million, or about 8.4% more than the sellers' asking price. The house, about three blocks away from [the better-known home and studio of Frank Lloyd Wright](#), is an 1890s Victorian that Roberts revamped around 1911 into a Prairie-style design with art glass in the windows, tile on the floors and fireplaces, and a distinctive grandfather clock built into an oversized staircase post.

“As soon as you enter, the house has a feeling of comfort and beauty,” said Russell Ainsworth, who bought the four-bedroom, roughly 4,170-square-foot house with his wife, Rachel Watson. Already residents of Oak Park, he’s a civil rights attorney at Chicago firm Loevy & Loevy, and she’s an associate professor of English at Howard University in Washington, D.C. They were represented by Cathy Yanda of Baird & Warner.



While they were not necessarily looking for a historical home, Ainsworth says, buying one, particularly in architecture-conscious Oak Park, “gives you a sense of obligation to maintain it and preserve it for future generations.”

The house was on the market quietly, without hitting the multiple-listing service, for about five days in May and attracted multiple offers, said listing agent Laura Maychruk of

Laura Maychruk Real Estate. She represented the sellers, John and Camaro Powers, who bought the house in 2017 for \$995,000, according to the Cook County Clerk's Office.

Eben Ezra Roberts, usually identified as [E.E. Roberts](#), moved from New England to Chicago in 1893 and worked for Solon Beman, architect of the company town of Pullman, before opening his own practice in Oak Park. His design is in about 200 houses in the town, as well as apartment buildings and the [Scoville Square](#) commercial building in the heart of downtown Oak Park.

“His homes are known for being designed practically, for family living,” Maychruk said, while also being beautifully trimmed with the art and craft details of the era.

Included in the sale of the house was a sign that Roberts used to advertise his architecture practice when he was partnered with his son, Elmer C. Roberts. It’s in the old studio, which Ainsworth said his wife will use as her office. It may also serve as inspiration to one of their three children, a high schooler who hopes to be an architect.











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