



**Ernest Wood Office and Studio**  
**126 N. 8th Street • designed 1911, built 1912 • Ernest M. Wood, architect**  
**Prairie Style**

This tiny essay in the Prairie Style is one of Quincy's true architectural landmarks. Designed by Ernest Wood for his own professional use, the building offered its architect a rare opportunity to express the full measure of his devotion to Frank Lloyd Wright. Its uncompromising rectilinear form, slab roof, monumental chimney, combination of stained cypress and tinted plaster, and integral landscape components (the raised planters) were all common components of Wright's work during the first decade of the century. The interior also speaks of Wright's influence. A small entry hall opens quite dramatically into the open space of the drafting studio, creating the illusion of greater space than the studio actually possesses. Fireplace and hearth, though they are secreted away in the architect's office, occupy the center of the building, a piece of symbolism of which Wright was particularly fond. That fireplace and the art glass in the wall opposing it are the finest touches of Prairie School detail in the building.

As with all of Wood's work, his design for the studio detaches from the Wrightian canon when practical function or a softer effect require it. A truly theatrical encounter with the studio room would have demanded much smaller windows and accordingly dimmer light in the hall, but Wood placed the comfort of his clients first. Similarly, Wright, who abhorred multiple doors, would likely have eliminated one or two of them in the office component, but Wood opted for more flexible access. But all in all, this is a building that shows how close Wood was in spirit to Wright when left to his own devices. No Quincy clients were to give him such freedom. For other comparably pure examples of Wood's Prairie School work, one must travel to Camp Point or Palmyra.

After serving Wood until his retirement in 1938, the building fell on hard times. In 1979, it was purchased by George Irwin, who immediately began a sensitive restoration of the building to its original appearance.

Current owner: Vince Gauthier

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS  
 OCTOBER 17, 1992