



Oliver and Margarethe Williams House
124 S. 20th—1916
Martin Geise, architect

Walter and Rose Heibrieder
2332 York—1919
George Behrman, architect

As a salesman for the J. R. Little Metal Wheel Company, Oliver Williams was on the way up, and his new house showed it. The mix of comfortably recognizable elements and Prairie School novelty was a perfect metaphor for a businessman trying to appear equally solid and progressive.

Young architect Martin Geise was a master of this particular idiom. The composition of the Williams' entry facade barely departs from mainstream design: a central entry, three-part windows, and absolute symmetry in placement of openings and the dormer were common components of pattern book houses around World War I. But the exposure to the side yard grabs large pieces of Frank Lloyd Wright. The usual sunporch is enlarged into a "living porch" spanning the full width of the house, and it is surmounted by a broken "window ribbon" of casements. Geise's own Prairie School innovations also appear in the peculiarly stepped bracketing of the dormer and the square moldings lining the roof cornices.

What makes the Williams House design so successful from the outside is the great expanse of the side yard, allowing the living porch plenty of space to breathe and emphasizing its role as a connecting link between the house and its environment.

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS
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