

IPHS Housewalk - 30 Years of History



Our Facebook page recently has been peppered with a number of inquiries regarding our holding a Housewalk this year. Since the majority of us were not here for the first event, we thought it might be prudent to at this time re-visit the earliest days of this event and come to understand how it became so popular.

The Irving Park Historical Society held its first Housewalk 30 years ago on September 14, 1985. Within its welcome pages it described the origin of the IPHS, and the strong need for an organization to work to preserve the history and architecture of the area. It emphasized the importance of the people who reside in the area over the buildings, and gave new meaning to the word 'neighbor'.

Back in 1985, the history of the neighborhood was almost fully formed, based on resources handed down from the earliest settlement to newly-discovered facts. In the same spirit, between then and now-30 years later-, facts have been unearthed to affirm or in some cases disprove what was published then. All of these tidbits contribute to making Old Irving Park one of Chicago's most unique neighborhoods.

In the intervening years, there have been the occasional updates resulting from more

efficient research, or something occasionally found in an attic or wall, and shared with the IPHS for the homeowners of the future ...

Herewith are some gleanings from the 1985 First Annual IPHS Housewalk:

All photos these pages from IPHS Archives; drawings by Leon Granacki ©1985

*3750 N. Kildare - A Prairie Style Brick Home
Built 1917, Architect David Mahaffey*

"This residence was originally built for P. Mahaffey. The residence represents, in the American culture, a new declaration of architecture ... independent of the European tradition in forms of space and as a function of life ... dark brick massing walls with a raked brick and matching mortar, overhanging eaves and casement windows ... oak floors, woodwork and staircase ... the leaded glass windows are truly among the most magnificent in this area."

2015 update: The house was built for Sam Mahaffey and his wife Pearl, previously of 4106 N. Springfield. Sam was the president of a wholesale potato company.



*3741 N. Kildare - Kilbert House
A 1911 American Foursquare*

"This home was built by Andrew Sundene, a developer, who later developed large parts of Portage Park. The first occupants moved in July, 1911. They lived here for 64 years and modified the home only once."

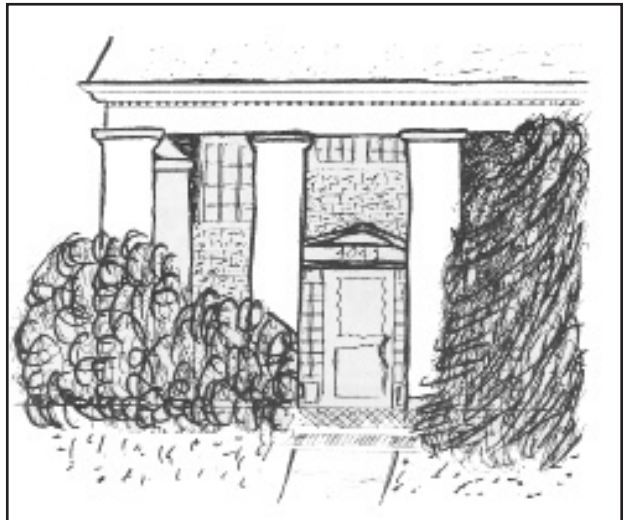
2015 update:
Owner Robert P. Kilbert was an artist born in Germany, who lived here with his wife Elizabeth and son Robert from the time the house was built through the 1940s.



*4041 N. Lowell - Winmilller House
A 1905 Colonial Mansion*

"This home was built in 1905 by the Windmilller Family, who owned a department store at Central Park & Irving Park for many decades..."

2015 update:
A highlight of the 2012 IPHS Housewalk, the true history was revealed to be that the house had been built and occupied by the famous, well-regarded Chicago architect, Elmer C. Jensen. A later owner of this home was Paul Windmueller (1920 through 1937), president of the Northwestern Pharmacy, located in Wicker Park.



4213 W. Irving Park Rd.
Antique Fabricare Museum

“For many years, Bea Wagar of Pert Cleaners has been collecting antiques that were related to her work. She has amassed such a collection of antique sewing machines, laundry equipment, scrub boards and flat irons - the front of the cleaners has been turned into a virtual museum.”

2015 update: Thirty years later, Pert Cleaners is still the place most of us trust with our dry cleaning. Thanks for being such a great neighbor, Pert!



3926 N. Kildare - Charles N. Loucks House
Queen Anne Victorian

“This home was built by in 1889 for Charles N. Loucks at a cost of \$15,000. The architect ... was Clarence N. Tabor ... The original owner lived in this house for eight years ... in 1971 it was almost sold to a builder who was going to demolish it and replace it with an apartment building.”

2015 update:
This house was featured a number of times on the IPHS Housewalk. The owners in 1985 were also the founders of the IPHS. The work they accomplished earned a Certified Historic Restoration and a listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The current owners, who've called this place home since 2000, have worked diligently and under their stewardship the house has become a Chicago Landmark.



3920 N. Keeler - Ole Jacobson House
A 1916 Craftsman Bungalow

“The owner ... was his own contractor... This style is a reaction, and in direct contrast, to the opulent detailing found in Victorian homes... When the current owner purchased this home in 1983 it had fallen into disrepair. The current owner ... is in the process of completely renovating this house.”

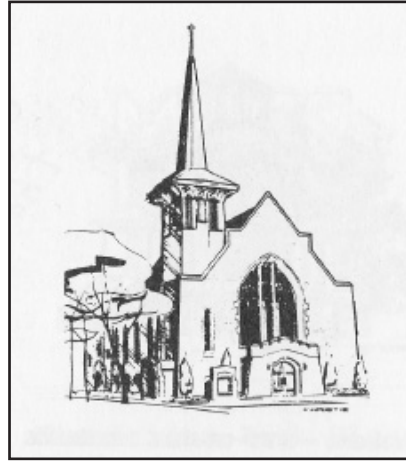
2015 update:
This house, built on the once-garden property of its neighbor to the north, is no longer extant. It was torn down in the early 1990s and replaced by one of the first of the large, non-architecturally styled structures that appeared in Old Irving Park during this era of homebuilding.



4053 N. Keeler
Irving Park Presbyterian Church, Est. 1872

"The Dutch Reformed Church and Society of Irving Park ...completed summer of 1872 at a cost of \$9,000 on 3 lots donated by village founder Charles T. Race. The architect, Henry Rehwoldt, an Irving Park resident, also designed most of the homes built around that time... In 1908, the church building was enlarged and covered with Bedford stone."

2015 update: Though no longer the Presbyterian Church, the building still stands and functions as a house of worship. 30 years ago, the Housewalk held a historical display here, and made refreshments available within.



4132 N. Keeler - Ropp-Grabill Residence
Italianate

"The exact age of this house is still under investigation ... it is certain that it was standing in 1871 ...we heard that they watched the Chicago fire from the cupola ... also the Indians ... Elkston Ave. was their trail and could easily be seen from the cupola. At one time the Indians were said to have quite an encampment at the Des Plaines River."

2015 update:
Despite only exterior viewing on this particular Housewalk, subsequent Walks featured the interior and beautiful restoration done by the owner. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in April, 1985 and became an IPHS Century House in 2008. It remains one of Old Irving Park's most beloved and well-known landmarks.

