

2012

Project: Picturing Milwaukee: Thurston Woods Pilot Study

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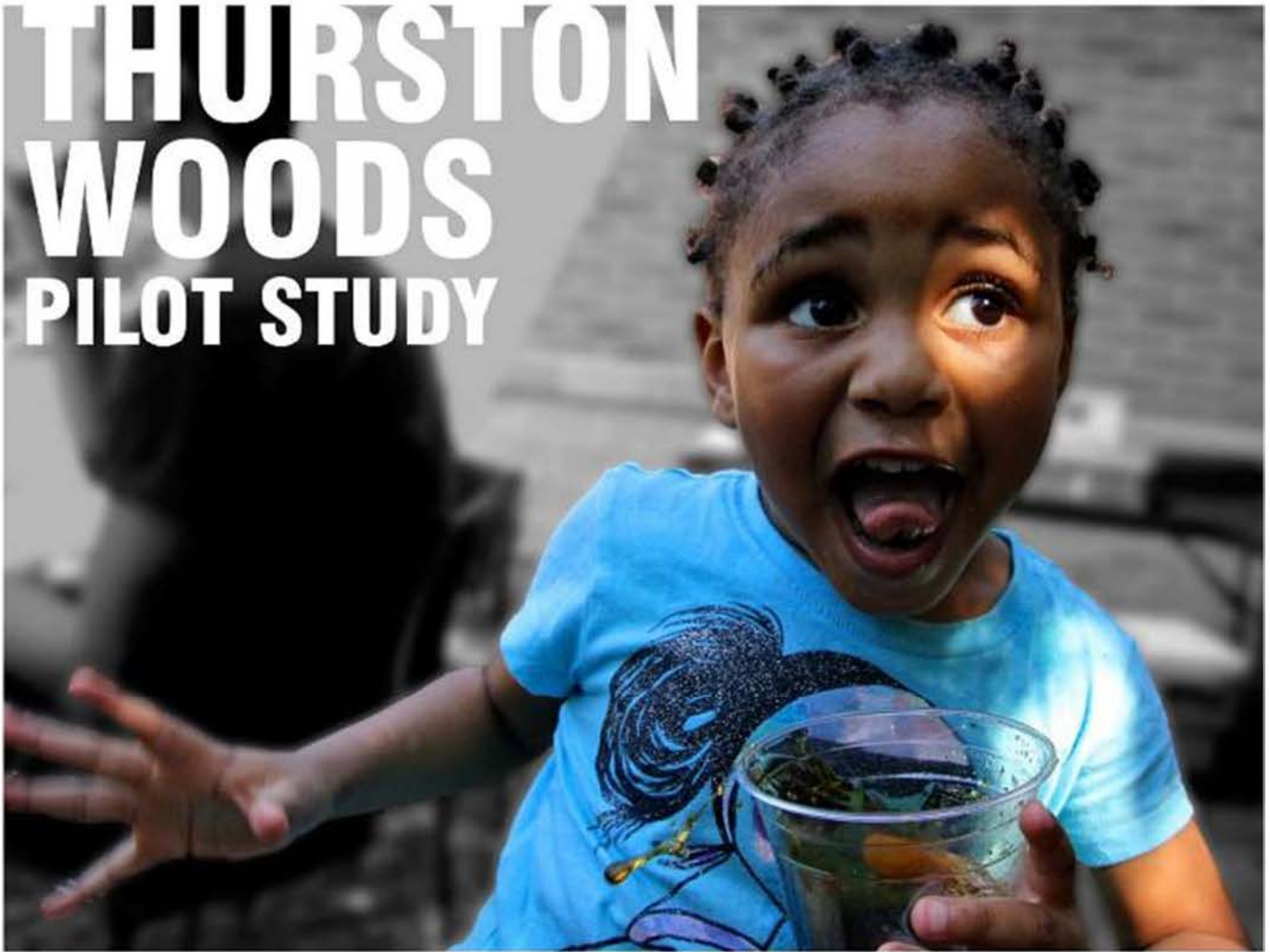
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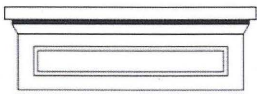
Project:
PICTURING MILWAUKEE

**THURSTON
WOODS
PILOT STUDY**



**A Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures
Neighborhood Storytelling Project**

blc



HISTORIC
MILWAUKEE
INCORPORATED



Agape Community Center

MINISTRY HEALTH CARE



wisconsin
humanities
council

The Wisconsin Humanities Council supports and creates programs that use history, culture, and discussion to strengthen community life for everyone in Wisconsin.

Monograph layout and design by Nathan Waddell and Chelsea Wait
Edited by Cynthia Anderson.
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Project: PICTURING MILWAUKEE

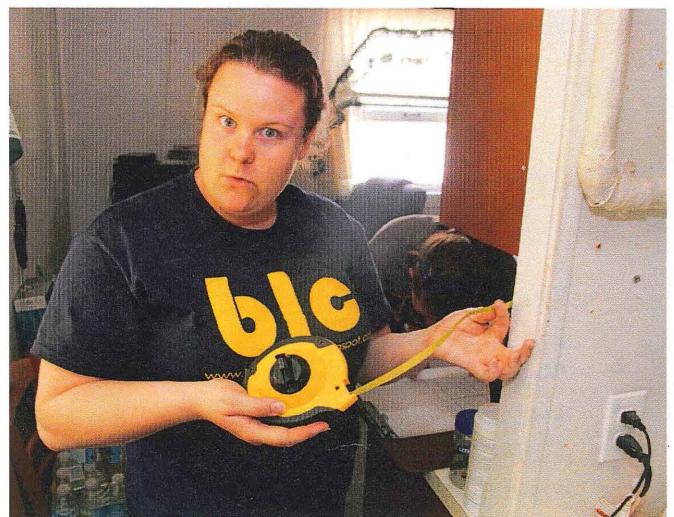
Thurston Woods Pilot Study

WHAT IS PROJECT: PICTURING MILWAUKEE?

Recounting stories of everyday places where we live and work can spur active engagement with others who share these spaces with us, revive interest in our built environment and encourage stewardship of this patrimony. The need for collaborative storytelling to create a public culture takes on a sense of urgency when established traditions and ways of life disappear and new ones emerge. Such is the case of Thurston Woods, a neighborhood in Milwaukee where old demographics and culture have given way to new inhabitants, economic practices and cultural life. Merely telling stories is not enough in these cases - rather citizens should be inspired to participate and contribute in a collective retelling of stories thereby producing a public discourse that is invested and engaged.

The objective of this project is to produce an inventory of sites that have historical value to this neighborhood and to provide users with interpretive ways of reading these sites. We expect that this project will increase awareness of neighborhood history and preservation of the built environment. *Project: Picturing Milwaukee* hopes that by providing critical tools and an interactive public forum for city officials, residents, neighborhood groups and citizens of Milwaukee, we can learn, discuss and produce stories of places that matter to all these people.

This project is significant because it will promote an easily accessible and free public forum for urban residents to share, interpret, learn and disseminate information about urban places as public culture. This project is innovative because it focuses on making expert ways of reading the city available to non-specialist users thereby seeking to create a critically informed citizenry who may serve as advocates and stewards of our urban built heritage.





WHO ARE WE?

The Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures (BLC) collaborative project at UW Milwaukee and Madison is an interdisciplinary research track concentrating on the examination of the physical, cultural and social aspects of our built environment. Fieldwork plays an important role in this program and a cross-campus fieldwork school is a special offering of this project. Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures field schools provide students with an immersive experience in the field recording of the built environment and cultural landscapes and an opportunity to learn how to write history literally “from the ground up.”

At BLC we write about stuff - cities, forests, buildings and objects – just about anything we can touch and hold. Material objects are powerful not only because they fill up our world, our homes and ultimately our landfills, but also because we desire and reproduce them incessantly, creatively and carefully.

Of all objects we love, places hold special significance for us because we inhabit and occupy them. Places are also repositories of stories, dreams, memories and feelings – all those complex intangibles that make us who we are. Our identity and histories are place-based. Our bodies move in and occupy place. Our actions take place in a location and during such action-filled moments we become who we are.

WHAT DO WE DO?

In 1978, Hayden White wrote about the art of writing histories. He argued that historiography is a poetic exercise. Historians plot stories; they highlight certain aspects and downplay others. Histories follow certain underlining and prefigured narrative structures within which we understand, read and reproduce our reality. Yet, each story, told differently, bent and crooked, follows some basic logic. History repeats itself in its telling, over and over, year after year.

Telling stories is so important because our stories spawn new ones. The careful craft of a storyteller emphasizes leaving loose ends. Loose ends let our minds soar like a kite; stories set us free. There are three kinds of stories in this exhibit. First are the stories of homes and homemakers. Home is more than the nuts, bolts, joists and joints that define a shelter. It is a symbolic space of ownership, memories, tears and love. It grounds residents to a piece of land and a lifetime of memories. Second, there are “community” stories. Residents fondly tell tales of a past long gone. Streets full of friends. Safe. Familiar. And now lost forever. The tales of loss are laments of a world that has changed irreversibly. They are also tales that reflect fear of the other, the unfamiliar and the unhomey, slowly creeping up the street onto one’s doorstep. These stories remind us that our community changes everyday and we have to constantly remake ourselves in order to belong in this ever-changing world. The third set of stories tells us about plants, animals, sun, wind and water. These stories narrate how we belong in this world of beauty and love – fearful of nature’s might and destructive power, obsessive about our relationship to this huge ecosystem. Nature is not something outside us – it is what we make and remake everyday and it is that larger home where we belong.

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Erin Dorbin (Hey Man Cool! Digital
History Productions)

Project: Picturing Milwaukee-Thurston Woods

In the summer of 2012, students, scholars and affiliates of Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures, worked with residents and community organizations from the Thurston Woods neighborhood in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in order to explore, document and examine historic buildings and cultural landscapes of this area. They created site reports that became part of the historical record of Wisconsin. Students received an immersive experience in the field recording the built environment. They received training in site documentation including photography, measured drawings, digital documentation, audio-visual production; historic interpretation of buildings and landscapes, focusing on how to “read” buildings within their material, political, social, cultural and economic contexts; and primary source research including oral history, archival research, architectural analysis.

A number of nationally recognized humanities scholars directing portions of this school, including Jeffrey E. Klee, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Michael H. Frisch, Professor and Senior Research Scholar, University at Buffalo; Judith Weiland, Director of Operations, The Randforce Associates, LLC; Jasmine Alinder, Associate Professor of History, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee; Michael Gordon, Professor of History, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee; Erin Dorbin, of Hey Man Cool, Digital History Productions; and Arijit Sen, Associate Professor of Architecture, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee.

This field school is sponsored by Wisconsin Humanities Council, the UWM School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Agape Community Center, Thurston Woods, Cultures and Communities at UWM, Department of History, School of Letters and Sciences at UWM, Historic Milwaukee Inc., and the Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at UWM.

Why Thurston Woods?

Our long-term professional goal is to promote civic engagement by disseminating stories that demonstrate the power of place in sustaining culture, citizenship and identity in American cities. We chose to use the Thurston Woods neighborhood of Milwaukee as our test case because of its unique history, geographical context and easy access. The history of Thurston Woods exemplifies Milwaukee’s history. Milwaukee, like many other cities across the Midwest, is known as an urban industrial center. Increasingly populated by waves of working class immigrants during the 19th and 20th centuries, Milwaukee’s history is replete with stories of struggles around class, labor and industry. By the turn of the 21st century, much of the sustaining industry had disappeared and Milwaukee became a “post-industrial” city in decline. The social consciousness and public discourses of the past century are no longer relevant to Milwaukee’s current citizens. When considered together with its segregated residential and settlement patterns, we confront an alarming lack of public forums that can unite and bring together the diverse residents of the city. Although festivals, parades and ethnic events provide civic opportunities to unite us, these events are seasonal, increasingly commercially oriented and less accessible to all citizens.

Thurston Woods has a rich history. The neighborhood has a collection of vernacular housing types, including Arts and Crafts, Cape Cod, Craftsman and Mid-Century Modern. The Berryland Public Housing Development was originally built for veterans returning from the Second World War. Other local spaces of historical and cultural significance include Agape Community Center, Christ Memorial Lutheran School, Jared C. Bruce Academy and Thurston Woods Campus School. Thurston Woods is also a perfect case study for a park system. Examples such as McGovern Park, Schoenecker Park, Smith Park and Havenwoods State Forest show how parks reflect our culture’s changing values and outlook towards spaces of recreation, wilderness, leisure, health, commodity and spirituality. According to the Milwaukee Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative, “The neighborhood is culturally diverse, located minutes from downtown and offers well-built, affordable homes. Its quiet nature and off-the-beaten-path location has made Thurston Woods a well-kept secret.”

Neighborhood Histories

Enhancing local knowledge through an examination of the built environment



Monica Frost, M.Arch Thesis 2012



The Thurston Woods Neighborhood History project preceded the field school. It was conducted by Monica Frost and was an effort to link research and history within a local community. This section is an excerpt from Frost's research. Her project "Neighborhood Histories" is an effort to link research and history within a local community. Often we see history as static information disassociated with our everyday lives. Museums, historic sites and historic markers are much needed ways of disseminating information to the public, but often their content overlooks the relationship between history and our modern lives. When we explore the places where we live, we discover a wealth of information about ourselves: past, present and future. Neighborhood histories influence the way we look at our environment and the way we understand the world around us.

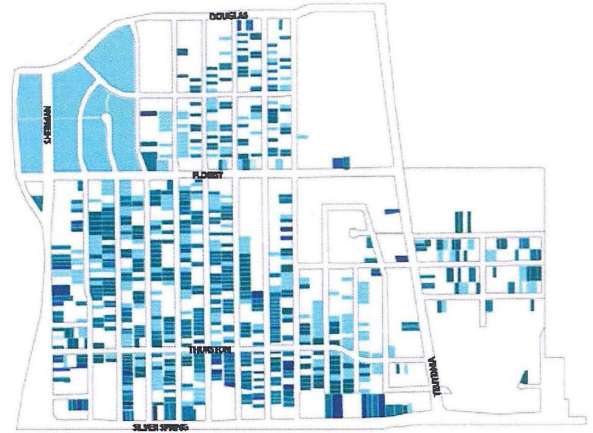
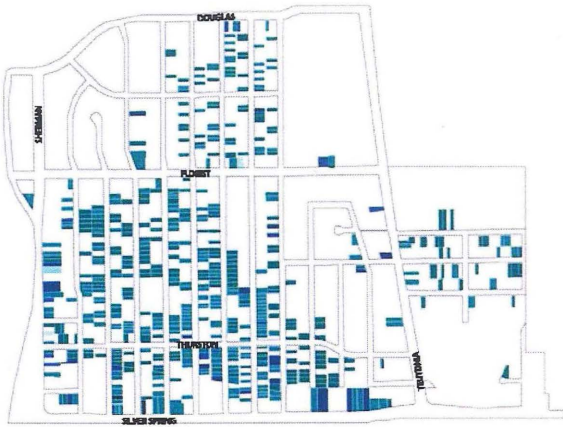


1900s

Streetcar Line 12 reaches Silver Spring and 35th St.

1920s

North Milwaukee Annexed



1930s

Motor Bus Routes introduced in addition to streetcars

1940s

Berryland Housing constructed north of Florist Avenue



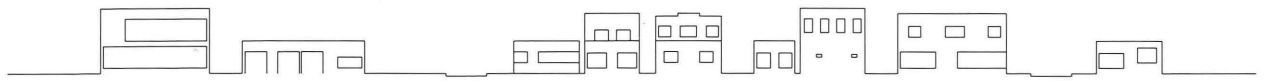
1950s

Project Nike Ajax Missile Base set up in Havenwoods

2000s

Agape Center promotes neighborhood projects

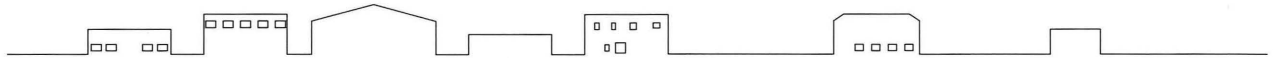
Thurston Woods Development



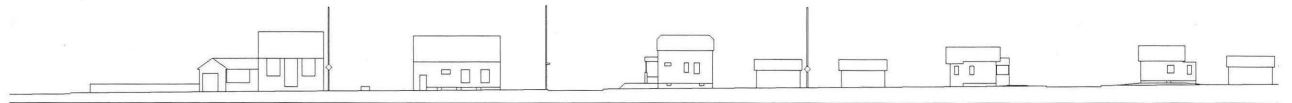
Silver Spring Drive Fenestration Analysis



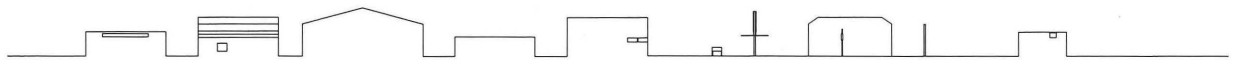
Thurston Avenue Fenestration Analysis



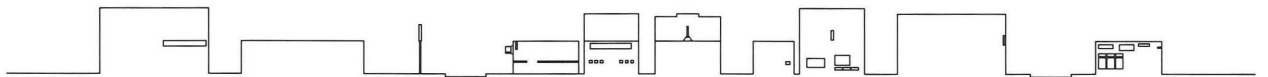
Teutonia Avenue Fenestration Analysis



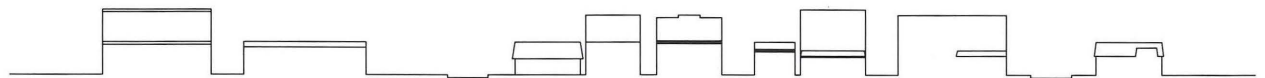
Thurston Avenue Signage Analysis



Teutonia Avenue Signage Analysis



Silver Spring Drive Signage Analysis

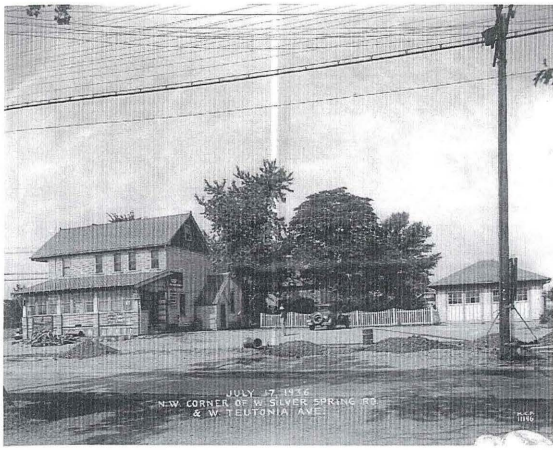


Silver Spring Drive Protrusions Analysis



Teutonia Avenue Protrusions Analysis

COMPARING FORMAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THURSTON WOODS STREETS



JULY 17, 1936
N.W. CORNER OF W. SILVER SPRING RD.
& W. TEUTONIA AVE.

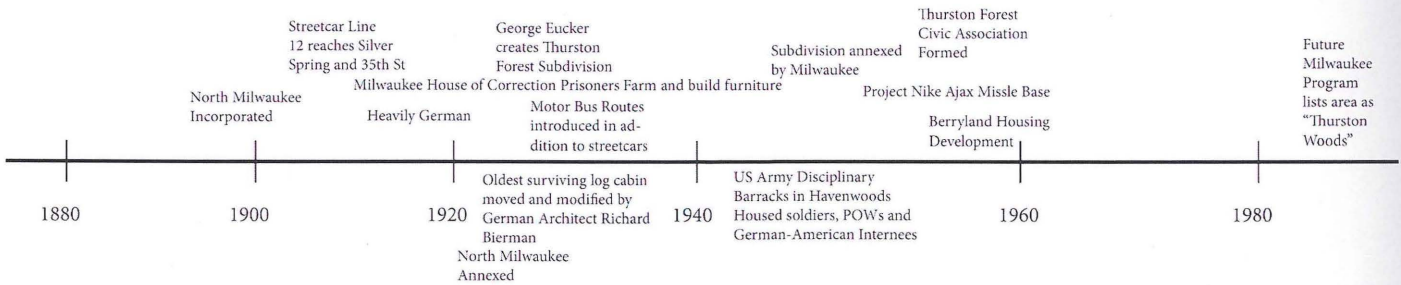
5515
W. Silver Spring
1975



JULY 17, 1936
N.W. CORNER OF W. SILVER SPRING RD.
& W. TEUTONIA AVE.



Silver Spring & Fort Washington - 1936 Cir.



Whether the extension of the street grid creates new communities or the creation of a "main drag" connects areas of the city, streets often establish boundaries while providing larger connections. Neighborhood streets can take different forms. They can be main streets, side-streets, backstreets, or alleyways, each serving its own set of needs and activities. Lower traffic volume and narrower widths give us a greater ability to share the road with vehicles. Streets can be closed for block parties, get you to your driveway, and discretely connect you to a larger network of streets. Medium streets function at the neighborhood scale. They provide efficient ways to get from one end of the neighborhood to the other. They support smaller areas of commerce that bind the neighborhood. Busy thoroughfares discourage foot traffic and street crossing. The high traffic areas become a city highway, taking you along the length or width of the city and extending to cities beyond. One such street is Cedarburg Road (presently Milwaukee's Teutonia Avenue) which evolved from a farming road to one of the city's major thoroughfares. This road began for ease of travel well before the area was incorporated into the city and its grid. The higher traffic pattern also determines the nature of the streetscape. Billboards and other large scale signs line the street, advertising products and businesses so that they can be easily identified by people driving their cars or riding the bus.



HOUSE HISTORIES

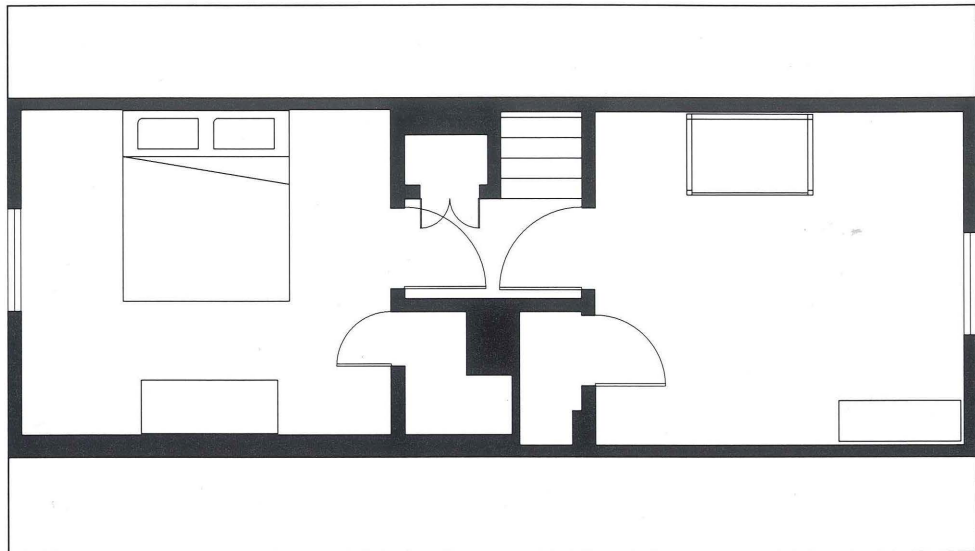
Introduction

House Histories

Community

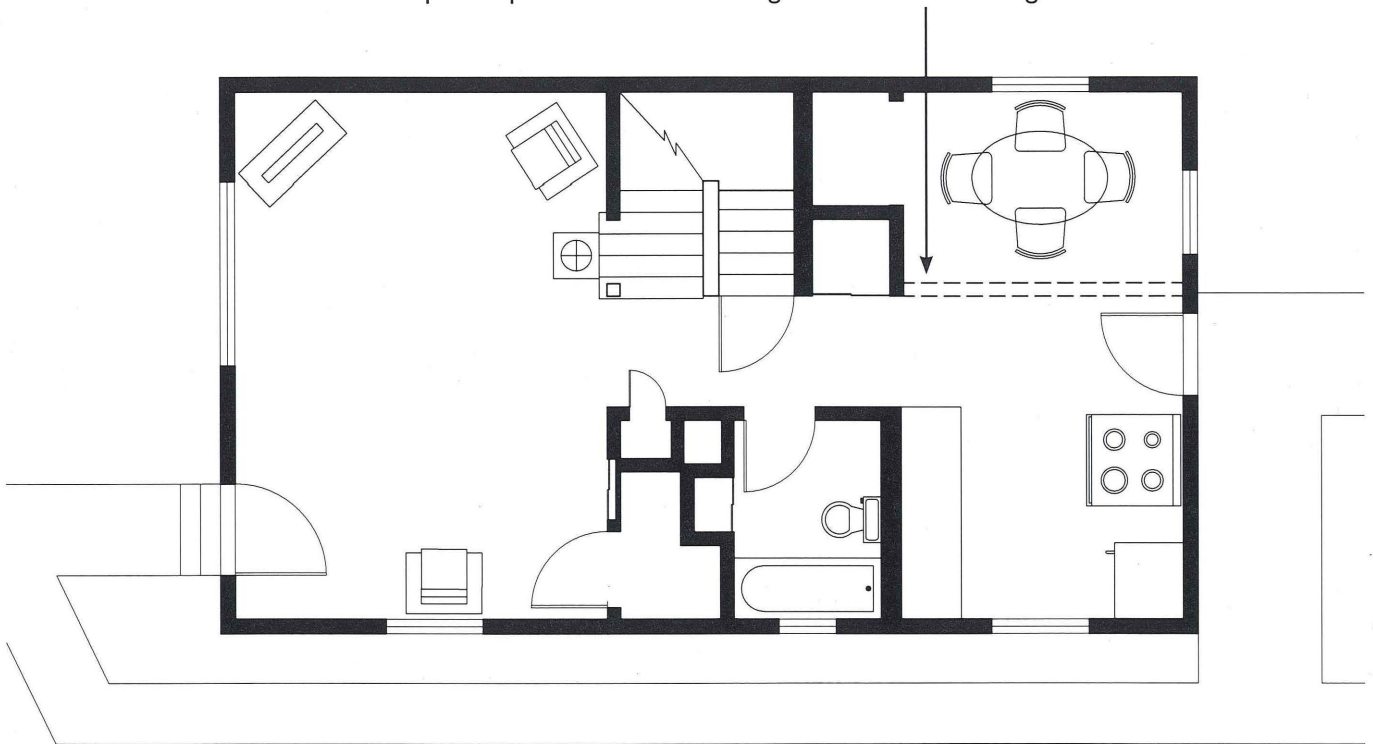
Nature

JOHN AND MARY'S HOUSE



Floor Two

Suspected period one wall dividing the kitchen and dining area.



Floor One

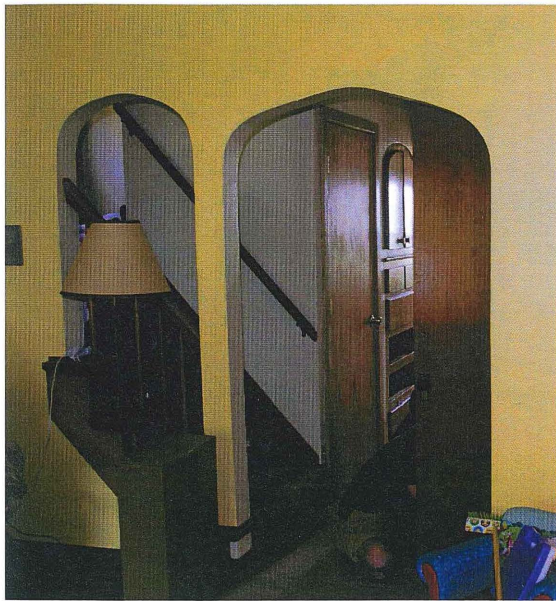


The Schmierers

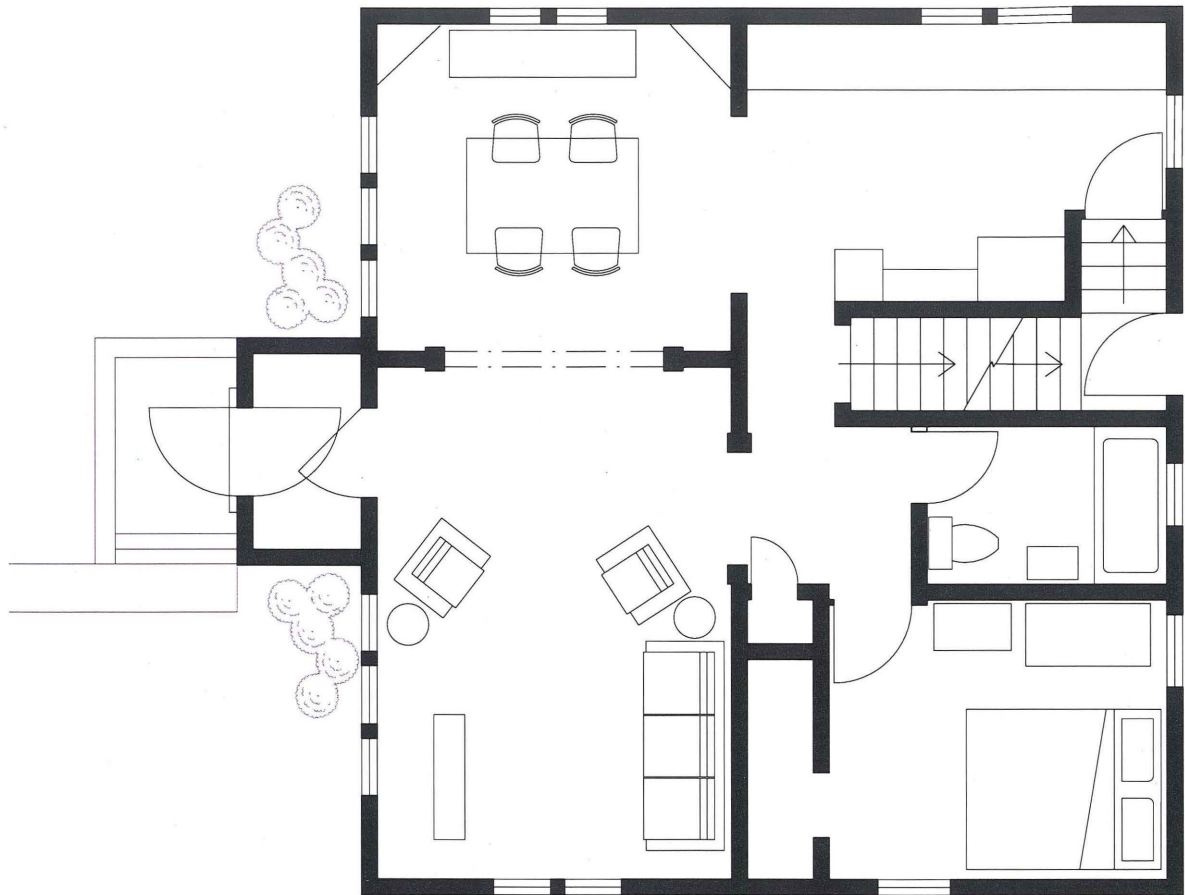
Mary Schmierer purchased the house in 2005 while working as a social worker for the city of Milwaukee. She chose the house because she loved the charm of the interior and the move-in-readiness of the property. She and her husband then met through match.com and were married the following year in 2006. John recently graduated with a degree in industrial design and Mary is a special education teacher for the Milwaukee Public School System.

House History

Built in 1949, this Cape Cod house is an example of the changing use of space over time. Evidence of a former wall in the kitchen suggests this open concept cooking and dining area were once two separate rooms. The changes, including covering the original entry to the once separate dining room with built-in cabinetry, imply that the kitchen has evolved from a space reserved strictly for work and meal preparation into a space for socializing, where the family meets to cook and eat together. The addition of a large patio in the back yard shows continued investment with the expansion of the home into an outdoor living space and the reappropriation of this space by the current owners.



LORIE'S HOUSE



Lorie Koehler

Lorie Koehler has lived in Thurston Woods since she purchased her family's home in 1982 with the money earned working part-time as a cleaner for Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) and while attending the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for a Fine Arts degree. Her 30 years in Thurston Woods have been spent involving herself within the community and enjoying what the neighborhood has to offer. When she first moved into the area, Lorie helped with the initial set-up of community gardens on the corner of Florist and 35th Street. In the 1970s, she fought for the preservation of Havenwoods State Forest, taking part in the sit-ins that occurred at City Hall. She was also one of many who fought to keep the Milwaukee County buses running to Thurston Woods.

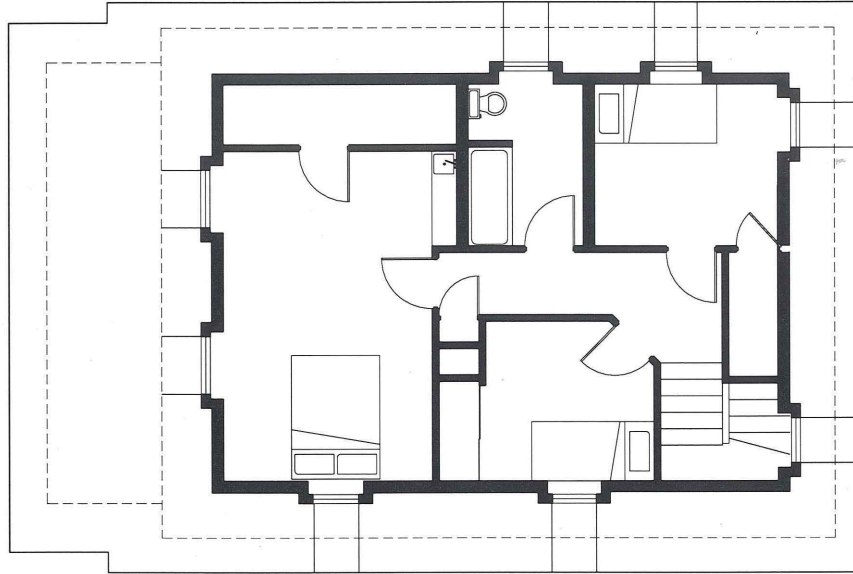
Lorie, her husband and two children have grown to love their neighborhood and all that the area has to offer. Her sense of place has changed from one that was rooted within the home to one that identifies with the outdoors. This shift occurred after her retirement and as she became more connected within the community. Her family members are avid bike riders and lovers of nature. The four of them make regular trips to Havenwoods to cross-country ski, hike, snow shoe, picnic and watch the wildlife.



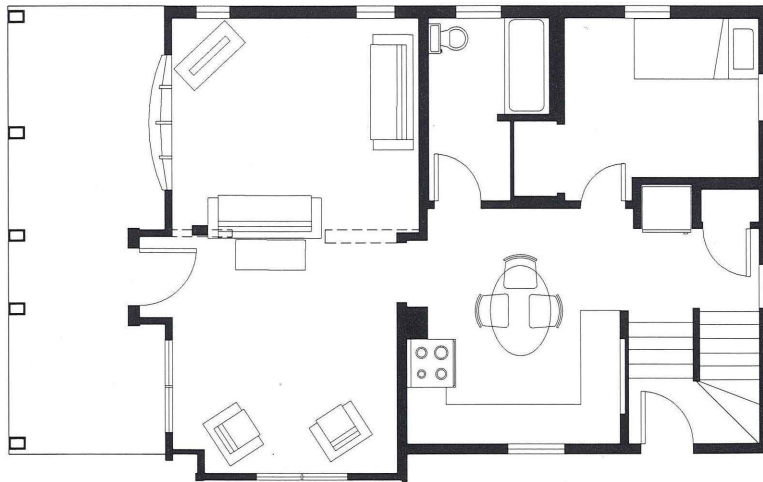
House History

Lorie's house was built in 1930. The house has six major rooms: three bedrooms, a living room, a dining room and a kitchen. The natural woodwork, decorative siding motif, curved front door and vaulted ceiling in the living and dining rooms represent a formal public front zone. The more private bedrooms serve as functional and intimate spaces. The entrance between dining and living room was possibly widened to give importance to the public areas of the house. The house has been re-modeled in the 1930s and again in the 1980s. We found evidence of re-surfaced wooden floors although much of the original oak and maple wooden floors in the living and dining rooms still remain. The second floor of the house was used as a rental unit during a housing shortage in 1950s. However we found no signs of a separate entry or independent heating controls for the second floor. The house was empty for two years until the current owner purchased the house in 1982. The original foundation, iron heating vents, gates, mail chute, key holder, garage, shrubbery, the "snowball" plant at the front steps and vines in the back yard are some significant features of this house.

JANET'S HOUSE



Second Floor



First Floor



Janet Tyler

Born in Milwaukee in 1952, Janet grew up in the suburb of Brookfield during most of her childhood years. A graduate of Brookfield Central High School, she went on to pursue further education in accounting. Her career has spanned numerous industries and has included 20 years at the Pabst Brewing Company and office management work in the office of a local doctor. Janet moved to Thurston Woods and her current home in 1998 with her husband and children. She is now the proud grandmother of 13 grandchildren, the newest addition having joined the clan this June.



Lighter floor boards show where a wall once stood.

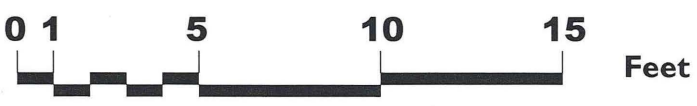
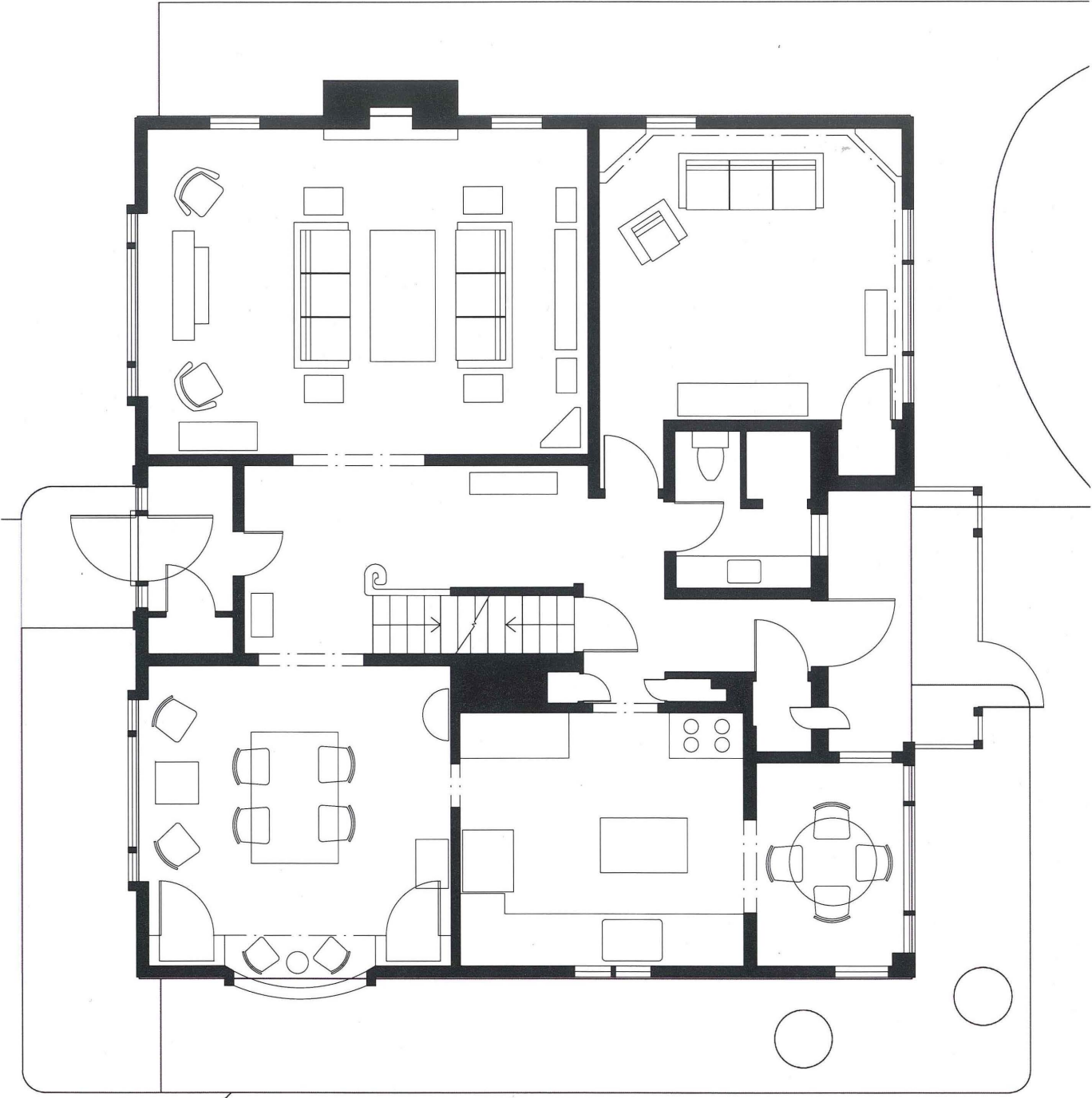


House History

The history of this home demonstrates a conscious effort toward improvement, transformation and a desire to set the house apart visually from the typical structures in the neighborhood.

Built in 1929 at a cost of roughly \$3,000, the structure originally had a much smaller second floor and no front porch. The current homeowner believes the second level was expanded sometime in the 1970s, the roof altered dramatically and the floorplan reconfigured and expanded to its current state. Beyond altering the real estate value, the dramatic changes to the face of the home suggest a desire on the part of the owner to build an increased social stature externally and internally. Such alterations, for instance the creation of a master suite, suggest not only changing conceptions of needed amenities but also an attempt by the modifier to bring an increased perception of respectability. The alterations to the internal living space likely also indicate an expansion to accommodate a larger family. There is evidence of creating a more open and unified space in the front portion of the first level. Scarring and patchwork were discovered on the original floors in the front portion of the first floor. This suggests a partial dividing wall was removed, possibly to create a social space in which a larger family might gather or perhaps to simply create a larger grand entrance.

MAVIS AND TOM'S HOUSE

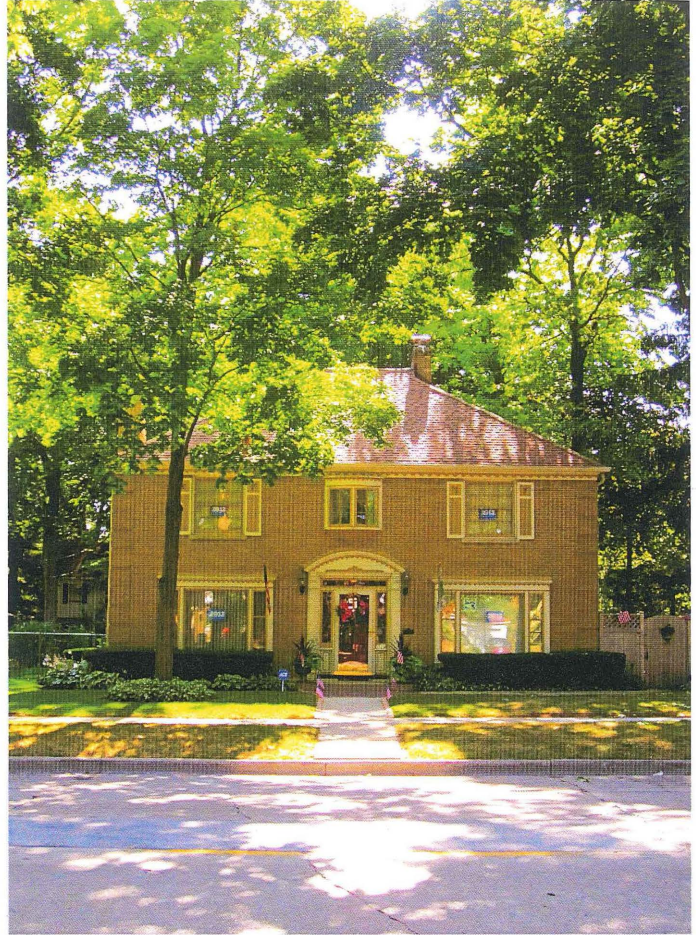


Mavis and Tom

Mavis and Tom McCallum moved into this home in 1999, attracted by the craftsmanship and built-in cabinetry and furniture. They have worked to recreate the home as their own while maintaining the original integrity of the wood and plaster work. Where there was once a woodshop in the basement, Mavis has created a secondary prep kitchen for large gatherings such as family reunions and charity dinners. The walls of the home now showcase Tom's art alongside the woodworking of the Lange family. These additions of a work kitchen and artwork are one of the many ways Mavis and Tom made a house their home.



Shadynook Hearth



McCallum Residence

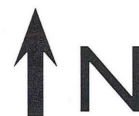
House History

The McCallum home was built in 1947 by John Lange and family, founders of Lange Brothers Architectural Woodworking Company. It is one of several Lange Brothers locally crafted homes in the area. The residence was built on a double lot and was among the first homes built in the Thurston Woods neighborhood, which was then a part of the Town of Granville. The Lange family lived here until 1999. The home showcases the craftsmanship of the family woodworking and furniture business, which is celebrating its 80th anniversary in 2012.

GEORGE'S HOUSE



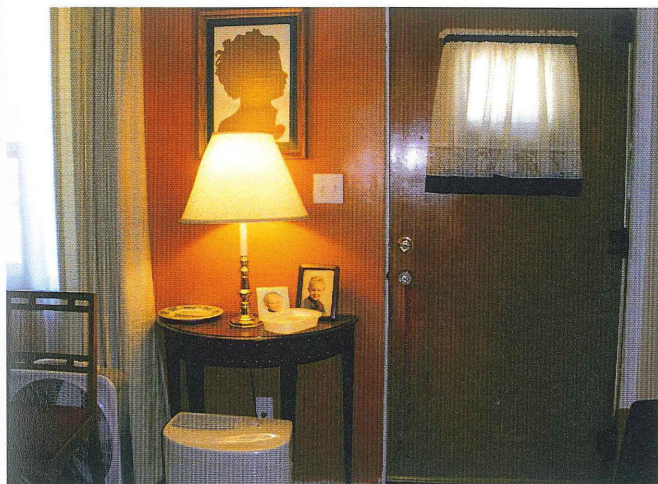
0 1 5 10 15 Feet



George Krauspe

A member of Thurston Woods since 1989, George Krauspe lived in a home on 42nd Street before moving to his current house on 38th Street. He has experienced the community as both a property owner and renter during his life as a trainer for utility construction companies.

George finds his home very comfortable for a single person and enjoys making updates during his spare time. A few projects that he has worked on include: rewiring outdated electric wiring, re-insulating precast panels and replacing fiber board with drywall. When he is not fixing up his home, George enjoys woodworking and making furniture.



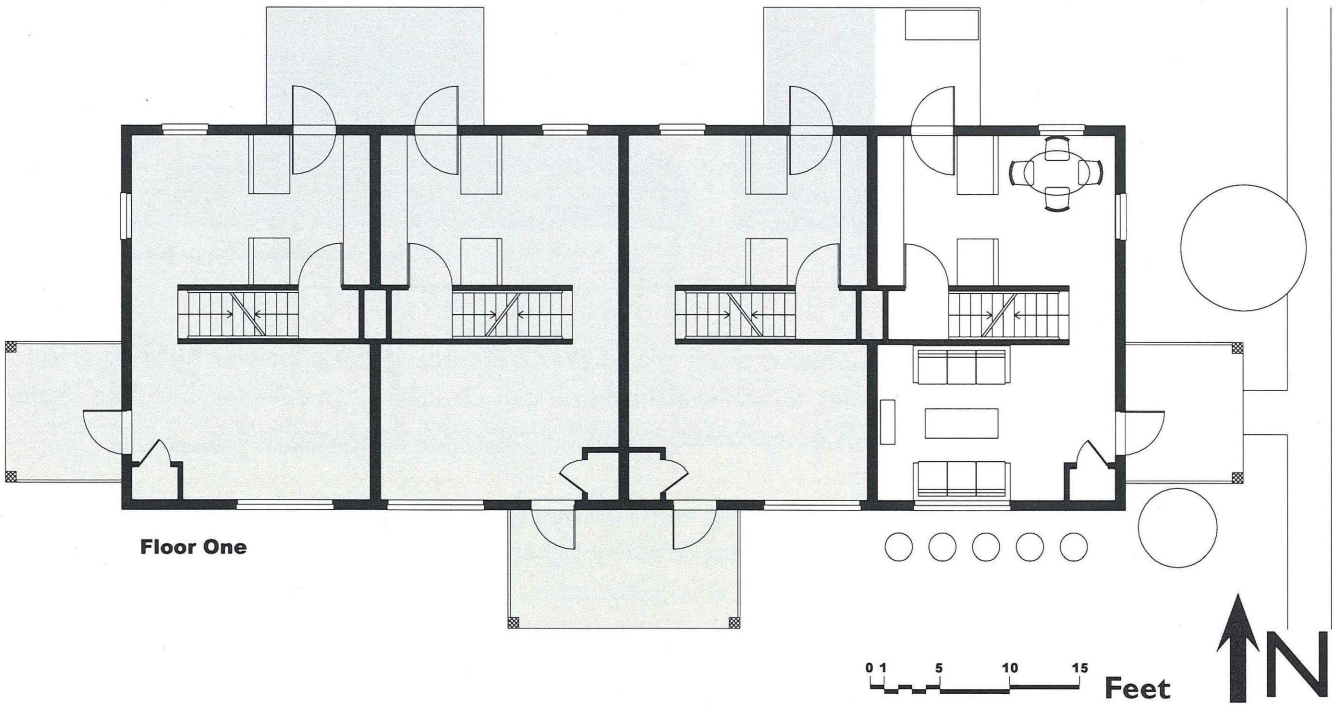
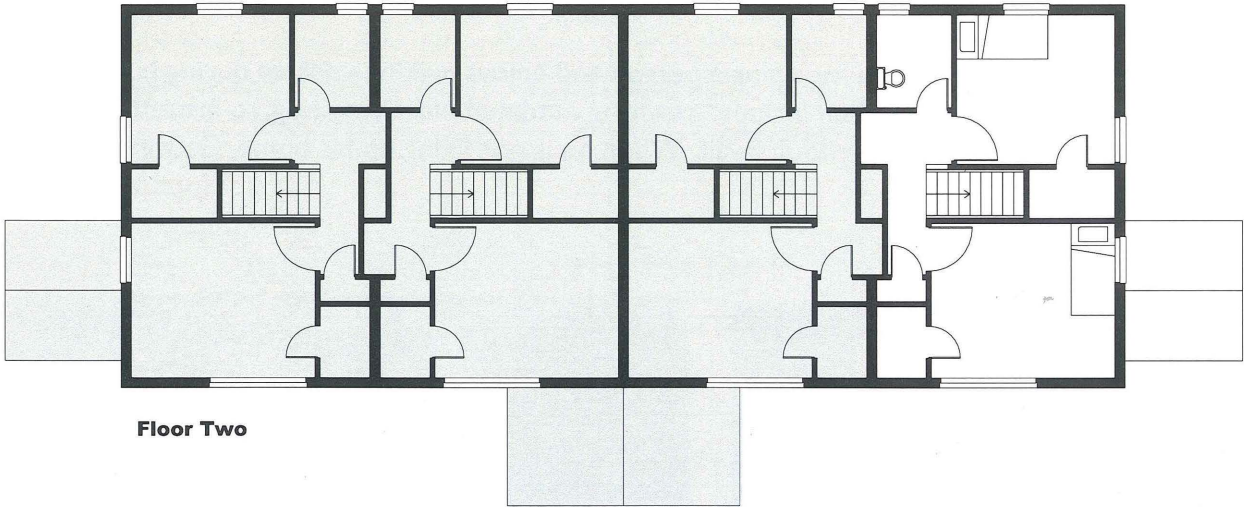
House History

The construction of mass-housing developments after World War II stemmed the post-war housing crisis and created a space for middle-class families to achieve the American Dream: home ownership. The legacy of this era can still be seen today in homes constructed in the Thurston Woods community.

In particular, George Krauspe's house on 38th Street reflects the style of mass-produced homes that allowed hundreds of thousands of Americans the opportunity for affordable housing in the 1950s. Stylistically known as "The Fargo," George's house was designed by the National Home Corporation (NHC). The NHC was a manufacturer of prefabricated housing and buildings. It also offered financing and insurance to its buyers. It is probable that George's house was constructed by one of the NHC buyer-dealers located in the area; however, we cannot say for sure. We do know that the house was prefabricated in 1951, meaning the building materials were made off-site, shipped to Thurston Woods, and constructed on location. Building materials included a wooden framework, aluminum/vinyl exterior siding, fiber board interior walls, plywood and a gabled roof clad in asphalt shingles.

One enters straight into the living room, used for entertaining. The kitchen was constructed as a separate space. This discrete room is different from the more open-concept kitchen+living space we encounter today. The efficient use of space in prefab homes is effectively represented in George's home. Finally, two bedrooms, one utility room and one bathroom completed the American Dream of home ownership. Owning a home was the dividing factor between the middle class and poor in a post-World War II world.

BERRYLAND APARTMENTS



Artist's Rendering: Berryland Veteran Housing 1949

Joan Davis

Joan Davis has been a tenant of Berryland since 1983. She is originally from Memphis, Tennessee. At a young age she learned how to bake with the help of her mother. Her passion for baking has driven her to pursue a career as a baker. She would one day like to own and operate her own bakery and hopes to be able to offer her delicious creations to her community. In years past, Joan has used her apartment as a child-daycare facility and has used her knowledge of baking as a tool to teach and inspire local children. She takes pride in her flower garden and keeps her favorite flowers in planters on the porch to beautify the entrance to her home. Even though she has been a resident of Berryland for almost 30 years, Joan says that if she decides to leave, those flowers are coming along with her.



Berryland Apartments 2012

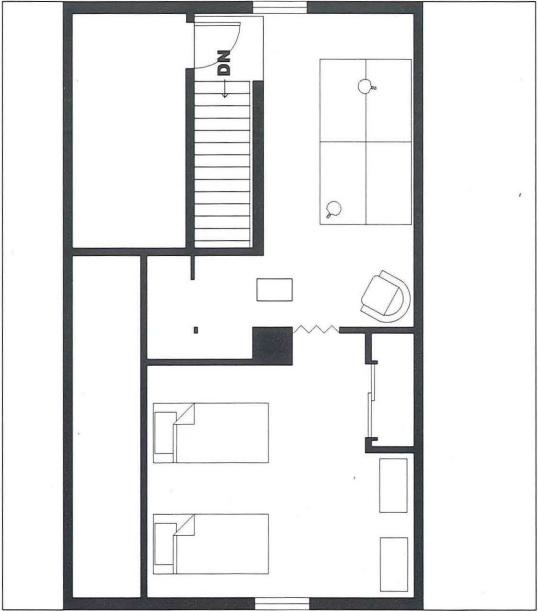


Joan Davis

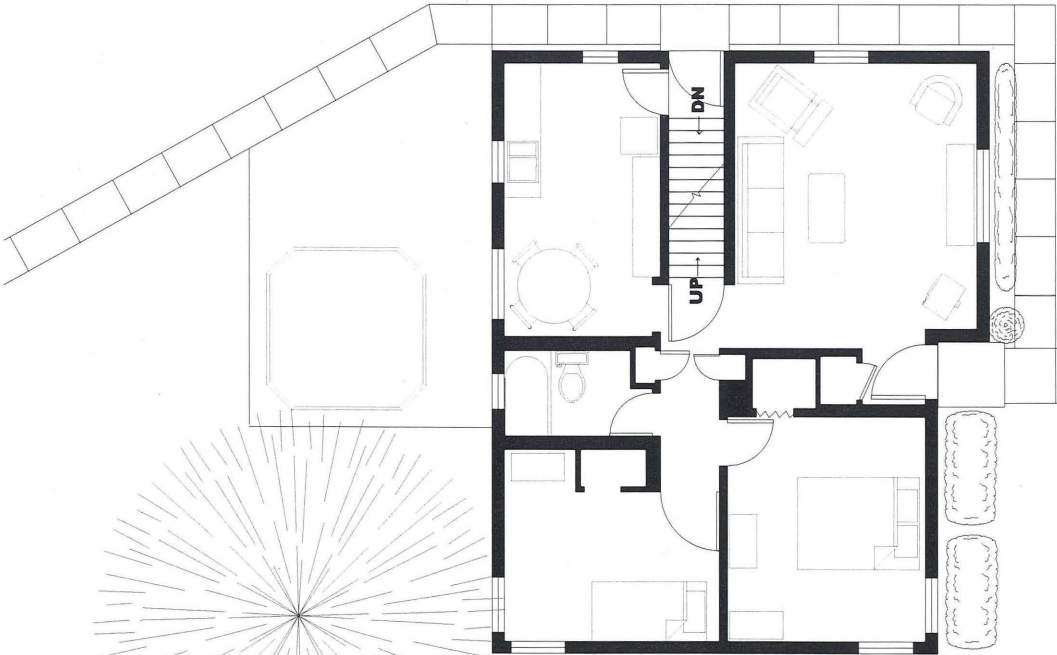
House History

Built in 1949, this apartment complex was constructed to house returning World War II veterans and their families. Promoted by the late Mayor Frank Zeidler, this project pioneered community-based housing across the country. Originally, the project was an attempt to bring together the segregated social classes in Milwaukee by creating a modern, integrated and affordable housing option for the growing middle class. The complex has since been occupied by individuals from different economic and social classes but veterans still receive priority status in admission to this housing. The apartment units were originally constructed with 2 and 3 bedrooms, each with its own basement, laundry and coal-fired, gravity warm-air furnace. In an attempt to adapt to new demographics, the complex has transformed over the past 63 years. The complex now offers one bedroom options. The most noticeable change is the new covered porch which was expanded in 2007. In addition to the porches, each unit has been retrofitted with new metal framed doors and windows and the basement windows have been removed.

JEAN'S HOUSE



Attic



First Floor



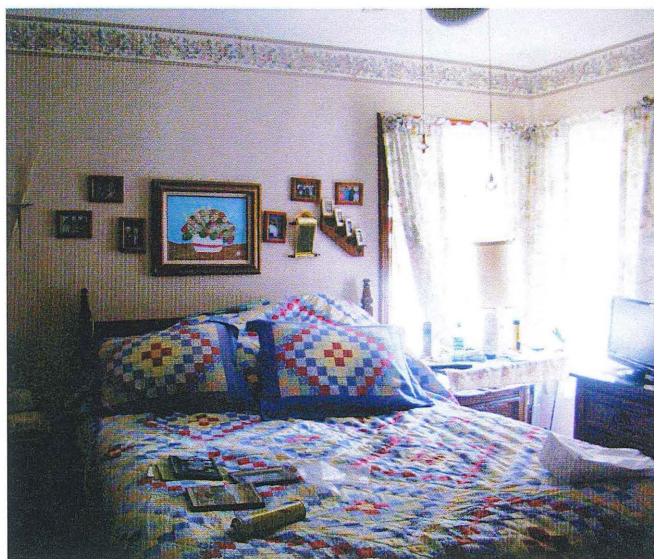
Jean Devlin

Jean and her family moved to the location in 1973 from the neighboring housing development, Berryland. By 1973, the Devlin clan equaled six, with two boys (Billy and Bobby) and two girls (Patricia and Kathleen).

Jean loves to cook. She had always wanted to expand her kitchen stating that “it was too small”; however, this renovation never occurred. She does not get to cook as much as she would like now that she often needs an oxygen tank; an open flame is hazardous when using oxygen.

She remembers how active the street was before the extension of Thurston Woods Campus Elementary School (formerly St. Albert’s Church). While she once considered herself the young one on the block when she moved in, now she is the senior storyteller of the street.

Jean proudly displays her Thurston Woods flag outside of her house - unless there is a Packers game, when she replaces the neighborhood flag with the Packers insignia. She keeps watch over her community and the neighbors who surround her.



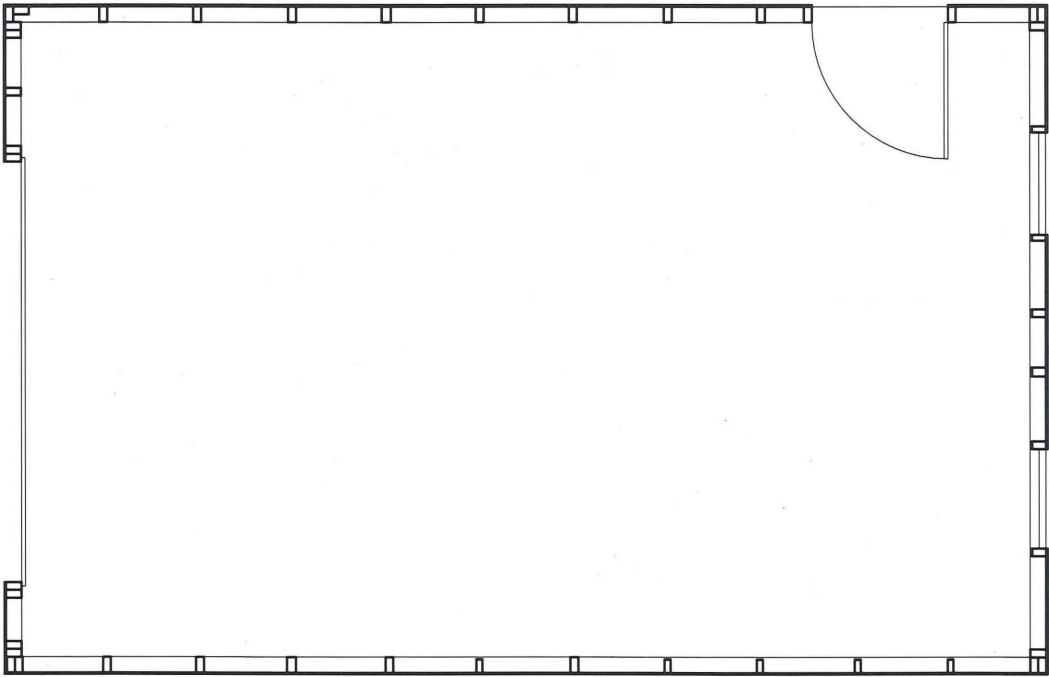
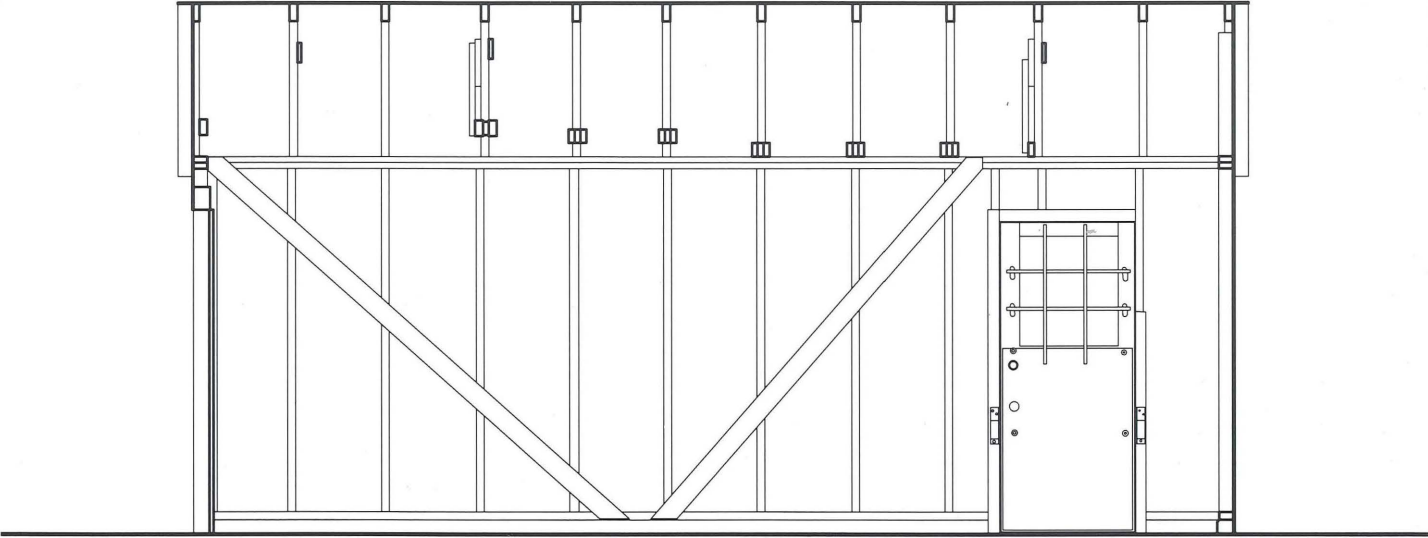
House History

Americans, taking advantage of housing loans provided by the Federal Housing Authority, found the means to move up or move out of crowded urban spaces or family homes and into their very own suburban abode.

In order to comfortably fit six people into the 851 square foot home the family made a few renovations; one major project converted the attic into bedrooms for the girls. Over the years, general maintenance of the house included updating the roof, putting in a smaller, more energy efficient front room window, reconstruction of the chimney and the addition of ceiling fans.

Other than these changes, Jean’s home maintains the same structural composition that it had when it was built in 1950. The layout is typical of those constructed during the period. One enters directly into the living room, which is the largest room in the house. The kitchen is just beyond the living room and is separate from it; not an open concept layout. Moving further into the house, two bedrooms, a bathroom and two storage closets branch out from a main hallway. At the north end of the hallway, a doorway hides a staircase that leads to the bedrooms on the second floor.

JOHN AND MARY'S GARAGE



Feet

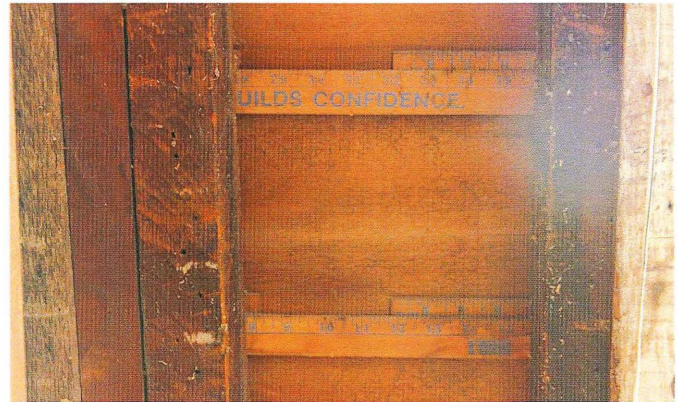
The American Garage

This garage is an extremely interesting structure because of the clearly re-purposed material used in the garage's construction. The origins of the material are unknown, but there is evidence of dimensional studs from three different sources.

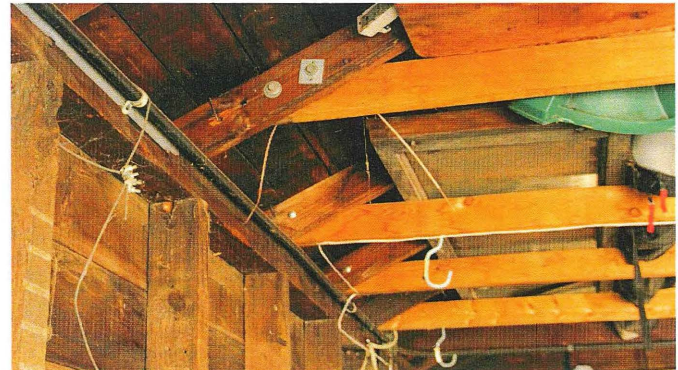
Some of the studs are clearly older than the others. The rough saw marks on the studs were caused by a worn circular saw blade suggesting that they were cut by the owner and not by a supplier. Also, many of the studs have evidence of lathing, which tells us that they were covered with plaster during their prior use. The use of old material to create a new structure implies ingenuity and resourcefulness on the part of the builder. The excessive number of nail holes in the roof boards as well as the studs also supports the idea that the material was repurposed for the construction of the garage. Some of the old nail holes in the studs contain the original machine cut nails that predate conventional wire nails used today.

The garage is an interesting expression of territory and boundary. Residents have always constructed physical boundaries to protect the places they see as their own and to protect the items they value. The more a person feels they are responsible for a space the more they make an effort to claim it and protect its boundary. This feeling escalates as the property line travels to the back of the house from the front. Here, the bustle of the public sidewalk and street gives way to the private chatter of neighbors, the sounds of a lawnmower and the subtle laughter of children playing.

Like so many other residences in Thurston Woods, the back of this house takes on a rigid boundary with the placement of a fence, which demarcates an edge and terminates at the paved driveway and the built garage. It is here that the driveway and garage maintain the privacy of the yard beyond by minimizing the exposure to the alleyway. Inside the garage, a family's precious items are safely kept until they are put to use. Even though a mower, for example, is in storage most of the time, it serves to maintain the property and assist in delineating an owner's identity.



Yardstick shims



New beams for storage space



COMMUNITY

BINGO NIGHT

At 4:30, bingo begins quietly, intently, and with lots of hushes. Each person gets one card and extras are 25 cents—some players play quite a few extras. “B13, B13... B11 – chopsticks, B11...” Numbers come marching out of the caller’s mouth in regiments and are checked off on the display board. We barely hear the tumbling of numbers in the round cage over the fans at the top of this small gymnasium, one of which has a noisy balloon stuck in it. The bingo players are dwarfed by the tall cream colored walls and the basketball hoops. Each table is set with plastic bouquets for the community dinner which happens immediately after bingo and fills the room with almost ten times as many people. “G59, G59...” Fifteen minutes into the game, one winner shouts “Bingo!” in a gruff voice, takes his card to the caller to have the bingo verified and claims his bag of potato chips. Preparation for the evening’s meal begins and so does clanking of pots and pans in the kitchen. After another winner who claims a box of microwave popcorn, people approach the snack cart next to the caller to get a muffin and a coffee and return to their seats chatting—and get reminded “You all gotta be quiet.” A woman and her son sit away from the crowd. Bored, he plays with his slinky while watching the rest of the group. The first winner wins again and assertively claims a bottle of fabric freshener. The caller ends his shift and joins the group, another takes his place; the numbers come faster because he does not repeat them. “N42. B8. O66.” People emerge from the kitchen to watch the quiet spectacle as the meal comes together. The smell of chicken and gravy fills the room. The first winner shouts “Bingo!” again and other players get frustrated. He claims a package of toilet paper and exchanges his potato chips for a bottle of detergent.



The Agape Community Center

is a gathering place for people in Berryland, Thurston Woods and surrounding neighborhoods. The small gymnasium is a perfect flexible space for different activities throughout the day that bring people together. Summer school classes, free lunches, evening dinners, basketball, elections and neighborhood fairs are hosted in this gymnasium. This room is functional and flexible because it is large and open and can be put to many uses. It is a place that many people use and a place that brings together many people in the community.



REMAINDERS AND REMINDERS



SILVER SPRING & 35TH ST.
LOOKING WEST
1950

A



SILVER SPRING & 35TH ST.
LOOKING WEST
2012

A



McGOVERN PARK
CIRCA 1950

B



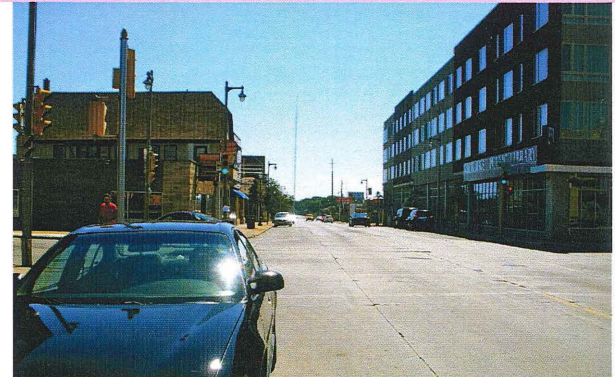
McGOVERN PARK
LOOKING SOUTH
2012

B



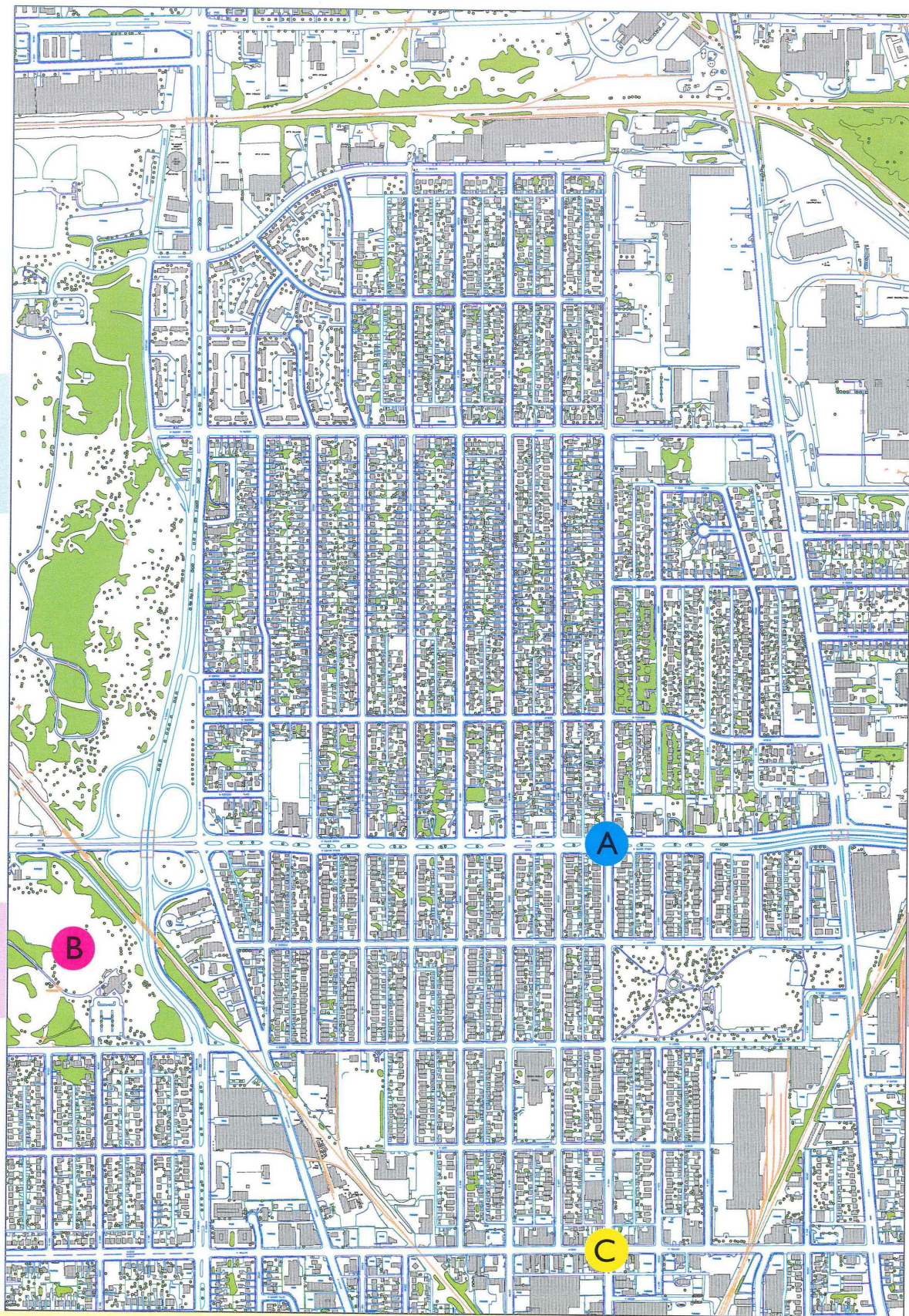
VILLARD & 35TH ST.
LOOKING EAST
1958

C



VILLARD & 35TH ST.
LOOKING EAST
2012

C



SENSE OF PLACE CREATES SENSE OF COMMUNITY



For many, the word community implies some sense of cohesion or group identity.

As time and economics rearrange the spatial and physical markers that represent and support community cohesion, how do residents of Thurston Woods maintain their identity? What has change meant for the construction of community identity?

We have chosen several prominent locations, which either no longer remain or have been repurposed, to examine their effect on the sense of community in Thurston Woods. These chosen places have changed significantly and now exist only as remnants of what was once a place where people could walk or bike to a local entertainment or recreational space.

The entertainment and recreational places inside Thurston Woods have been reduced to a small percentage of what once existed.

It became clear when interviewing residents of Thurston Woods that commercial, recreational and other communal spaces were important to the building of a community identity for the Thurston Woods neighborhood. Today, there is a desire for those once-present spaces such as McGovern Park swimming pool, local entertainment on Silver Spring and shops along Villard Avenue to return.

These spaces, as physical and social constructors of community, reveal that local places matter in the creation of pride and belonging. When pools are closed, schools are abandoned, or retail shops leave the area, everyone must leave the neighborhood to fulfill basic needs; the sense of place will begin to decline. The neighborhood becomes a bedroom community on the outskirts of an urban area where no one feels invested.

Is that what we are seeing here?

With heightened mobility comes a geographically dispersed social and spatial network. What would once take hours to reach by bus, trolley, or foot now takes minutes by car with little to no waiting. Many claim that this makes the world a smaller place. People can “get out” and see more things, but at what cost? Large, multi-use consumer parks draw large crowds to commercial centers, but what happens to the places left behind?

For there to be pride in a neighborhood and a strong community identity, people must stay in the area. There must be economic investment as well as emotional investment. Thurston Woods neighbors are emotionally invested in their community, but they still leave to find social and recreational venues. Traces of these once popular venues and places act as mementos of social experiences, but they no longer function as spaces that construct contemporary community identity.

WOODS



COMMUNITY ACTION:

Creating a Greater Public Sphere



Thurston Woods may be small, but it faces many of the same concerns one would find in other urban neighborhoods. Among them are issues surrounding safety, neighborhood pride and resident participation in the betterment of their neighborhood. Various groups are active and are founded on an informal level or by larger, more “official” organizations such as the Havenwoods Economic Development Corporation. The more official groups tend to have access to established structure, resources and pre-existing lines of communication with institutions such as the Department of Neighborhood Services and the Milwaukee Police Department. Beyond the official, individuals, small informal associations and groups of neighbors work toward transforming streets and blocks. Although the structures may be different, these official and unofficial groups tend toward the same goals. Among these groups there exist “world makers” who take charge and lead the way forward in bettering their community. But these residents often find barriers to their common goals. The resilience of these people and their ability to overcome obstacles is crucial for continuing to move the community forward. Can these world makers be unified to promote a stronger neighborhood? One thing is for sure, all agree that it is the residents of Thurston Woods, and no one else, who can and must be the force behind continuing change.

The Agape Community Center

What role should the community center located within the bounds of Berryland play? How can it achieve a central role in unifying the broader Thurston Woods community into a greater public sphere where residents can network and support one another in their efforts to achieve common goals for the future of Thurston Woods? Tanya Fonseca, neighborhood coordinator and planner at Agape, hopes to help support the broader Thurston Woods community. She knows, as do many others, that the future must be envisioned and molded by the residents.



Mavis and Tom McCallum

Guardians of the Past, Makers of the Future

Long before the arrival of the official block watch groups, Mavis and Tom were among a community of residents who kept an eye out and reported issues to the police. They contribute to the creation of a stronger neighborhood through many informal methods. Whether it was a campaign to save old trees or an effort to gather neighbors to oppose a store from acquiring a 24-hour license, the McCallums maintain the importance of being active within the community. They have seen an influx of renters into the neighborhood but believe strongly that all residents, whether renter or owner, can and should contribute to the high standards of the neighborhood. With the wisdom of the past and determination to maintain a bright future, perhaps it would be beneficial for other world makers of Thurston Woods to develop a connection with these longtime residents. But who can connect them?

"You are your neighborhood."

~Mavis



John and Mary Schmierer

Past Block Watch Captains

John and Mary are former block watch captains on 41st Street. Their story brings to light the “official” form of community action, working with liaisons to the police district and educating neighbors with standardized material. Not only did their leadership role help foster lasting relationships with other block watchers, but it also helped them connect with their neighbors, something that continues to pay dividends after they ended their involvement as captains. Although they were part of a more structured and organized system, they struggled with getting involvement and turnout. They continue to keep in touch with their neighbors and promote block watch activities. Forty-first Street needs John and Mary.

“What brought us closer to our neighbors was that we started the block watch.”

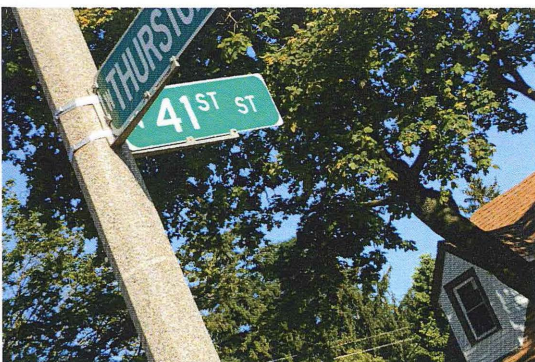
~Mary

“I don’t think I have ever lived anywhere where I went to everybody’s door and said ‘hi’. Like I have here.”

~John

“We’re glad they’re here...their expectations and values match ours and that’s important to feel like you’re not alone.”

~Mary



Elaine and Chuck Jackson

World Makers

Elaine Jackson moved to Thurston Woods in 1996 when many of the residents on her block were original owners or in owner-occupied homes. Since then she has seen much change, including a major turnover in residents and a shift to renter occupied properties, most likely the result of the housing crisis of this past decade. Elaine Jackson is not part of one of the official block watch groups, but has participated in informal associations in the past and plans to help lead the way with another soon-to-be formed block association. Like other world makers, she struggled to get and maintain involvement. She attributed this problem to the changeover of residents. Who can support and help sustain her faith in the future?



"We need the people to fall in love with this community..."

~Elaine Jackson

"It will get better... but it takes everyone to get involved. I know we can ask the city to do so much but money can only do so much. Money is not the answer to everything. We need the people to fall in love with this community and have a love affair with this community. And I think it will blossom."

~Elaine Jackson



PLACES OF FELLOWSHIP: Gathering Places in Thurston Woods

Past

Prior to its closing in 1992, St. Albert Parish and School was an integral part of the Thurston Woods community, a nurturing environment that focused on the community and promoted togetherness. It was a public space where the community came together to share what they had in common. After its closing, the neighborhood environment changed. Over the course of ten years, many residents of Thurston Woods chose to relocate.

Present

The loss of the church is still very much present within the community. Today, St. Albert Parish and School is the Thurston Woods Campus Elementary School. The face of the gathering place is no longer one based on religion, but it retains its role as a site of fellowship. Although no longer a church, the new building is still a location where the community can gather and share experiences.

Access

Many Thurston Woods residents have been forced to look outside of the area for places of worship. Some walk, some drive, and others take public transportation in order to reach their destinations. Churches that were once rooted firmly in Thurston Woods have now moved farther away creating a more dispersed and regional network of parishes.



Former St. Albert Parish church



Map of Thurston Woods: Church locations are in black

“For 14 years ... we went to Sherman and Douglas where we could walk if the car wasn’t working. Now we go to Eastbrook Church. Another reason for those particular churches is it’s in the area. It’s a feasible amount of distance, it’s not something that use a lot of gas, takes a lot of time to get to.”

– Patricia Weber

“I went to church at Holy Redeemer because St. Albert’s disbanded. We were the first Catholic church in the city to start consolidating, so it was St. Nicholas and Holy Redeemer and then we turned into Blessed Trinity. They just now sold it. Now we have to go to St. Catherine’s on 51st and Center.”

– Jean Devlin

“St. Albert’s Church had a very big draw in the neighborhood. A lot of kids went to school there... The families went to church there. When the church closed, you could just see a definite change in the neighborhood. People just started moving out.”

– Lorie Koehler

“I had my kids baptized, first communions, confirmations. My oldest son got married there. This was the front of it. Upstairs is where the school was, the downstairs was the church, and then in the basement they had an auditorium. That’s where the parties and different functions would be.”

– Jean Devlin

FOOD AND GLOBAL CULTURE



Chicken & Grill House

The world opens up to us in a small restaurant like the Chicken & Grill House. Jamaican chicken, Greek pizzas, gyros and curries, all take the customer on a culinary journey across the world. A bite into the shish kabob or chicken teriyaki allows us to conjure up alien lands and exotic cultures. The Chicken & Grill House not only satisfies our hunger but takes us on a cultural adventure without leaving Thurston Woods. In a matter of seconds, the sights, smells and tastes give us a glimpse into global cultures. The Chicken & Grill House brings people together to eat. This place not only provides balanced nourishing food but also enhances the neighborhood economy.

SANDWICHES	
Hamburger	\$ 3.25
Cheeseburger <small>Melted cheese, Toasted Bun, Mayo, Ketchup, Mustard, Onion, Pickles</small>	\$ 3.45
Double Cheeseburger	\$ 4.75
Gyro <small>Tomato, Onion, Peppers, Gyro Sauce</small>	\$ 5.75
Grill House Burger	\$ 5.95
Buffalo Ranch Burger	\$ 4.75
Island Burger	\$ 3.75
Chicago Style Hot Dog	\$ 2.95
Philly Cheese Steak <small>CHEESE + G. PEPPER + onion + Mushrooms</small>	\$ 5.95
Big Daddy Chicken <small>CHEESE + Green Peas + onion + Mushrooms</small>	\$ 5.85
Phat Cat <small>CHEESE STEAK + Grilled onion + MUSHROOMS + Melted CHEESE</small>	\$ 5.95
Grilled Chicken <small>Juicy Grilled Chicken Fillet, Mayo, Lettuce, on Toasted Bun</small>	\$ 5.75
Crispy Chicken <small>Crispy Chicken Fillet, Mayo, Lettuce, on Toasted Bun</small>	\$ 5.75
Italian Beef <small>Juicy Tender Beef, Grated Swiss Pepper, Dip of choice</small>	\$ 5.95
Catfish Fillet <small>Butter Sauce, Lettuce, Big Catfish Fillet</small>	\$ 5.85



Ratb's Journey

Ratb Abunaj was born in Palestine and moved to Jordan along with his family at the age of four. He grew up in Jordan and also traveled to France, Germany, Spain, Morocco, Egypt and Syria before coming to the United States fourteen years ago. Ratb studied in Ohio and opened Chicken & Grill House in Thurston Woods in 2010. It is Ratb's mission to take his customers on a culinary journey and provide them with healthy food. In the future, Ratb plans to add kofta kabob, shish tawook and shawarma kabob to his food menu.



NATURE

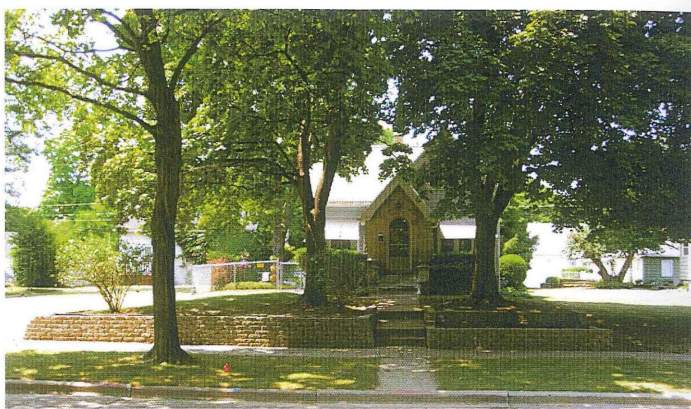
THE FRONT YARD IS THE STAGE



40th Street

Where Do You Find the Welcome Mat?

Thurston Woods is a quiet, residential area where 'city' and 'suburb' blend together. Front yards are places of personalization within a community setting. Our yard work, craft and care are attempts to answer two calls: Who are you? What do you stand for? To reply, we put up signs, create unique entrances and carefully select plants that tell the public about ourselves. The American front yard is a stage, backgrounded by the home and opening onto the street as a stage opens onto an auditorium. We spend hours tending, trimming, mowing, pruning, cleaning, decorating and supervising our little piece of land. It is where nature – flowers, trees, shrubs, stones, earth – is constantly tamed. The lawn is thought of as a place for children to play and summer parties, but it is most often a place to traverse and survey, both with our eyes and with our feet. As we approach a stranger's house, with each step we feel like we are leaving a public place to enter someone else's territory. Yet, there are occasional indications that someone inside will be friendly. When we hang signs and flags – "A SuperReader Lives Here" awards, Obama 2012 boards, POW MIA flags, "Pray for Peace" placards, even welcome mats – we are identifying ourselves with a particular group, taking pride in our collective belonging. The yard itself is a sign or a notion that if we craft our yard carefully to a set of social standards, we are good neighbors who add value, both monetary and social, to the street. Our individual actions are for the greater good. Yet, if our lawn is overgrown, if there are weeds, if the paint peels, if holiday decorations are left up too long, if there is no welcome mat, are we bad neighbors? If on our stage, we do not seek a standing ovation, are we shirking an American responsibility?



39th Street



39th Street



40th Street



41st Street

INVISIBLE ALLEYS



Alley Between 34th and 35th Streets, 5600 Block

Alleys Have No Address

Within Milwaukee, Thurston Woods is an in-between place, part of the city, but far enough from the center to be a suburb. The alleys of Thurston Woods are traces of this, the city's northward push—which was one of the last expansions of the city.

Alleys have no address. They are socially invisible in-between spaces.

We turn our backs to alleys and cut them off at the property lines with fences and hedges. Few windows face alleys. Building facades facing alleys receive less upkeep. In Thurston Woods, alleys indicate the presence of the city; they are places where street paving spreads, garbage trucks come through, and electric poles bring us our much needed energy. It is often perceived as a place of danger, suspicious people and graffiti. Simultaneously, alleys are also a place where youth feel they can escape the eyes of authority—their parents or the police—while they play a forbidden game, curse, or set off fireworks. Alleys are places of no restraint, yet they are zones of high security because they are also a place of storage—garages full of things we do not want to see or to be seen: cars, motorcycles, grills, outdoor equipment, tools, holiday decorations, toys and boxes of forgotten valuables.



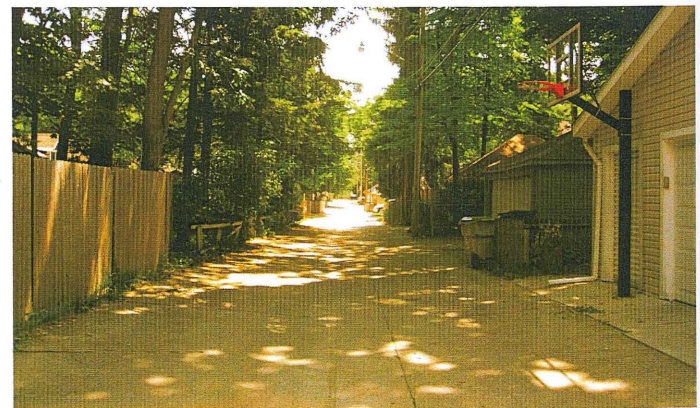
Alley Between 34th and 35th Streets, 5700 Block



Alley Between 35th and 36th Streets, 5600 Block

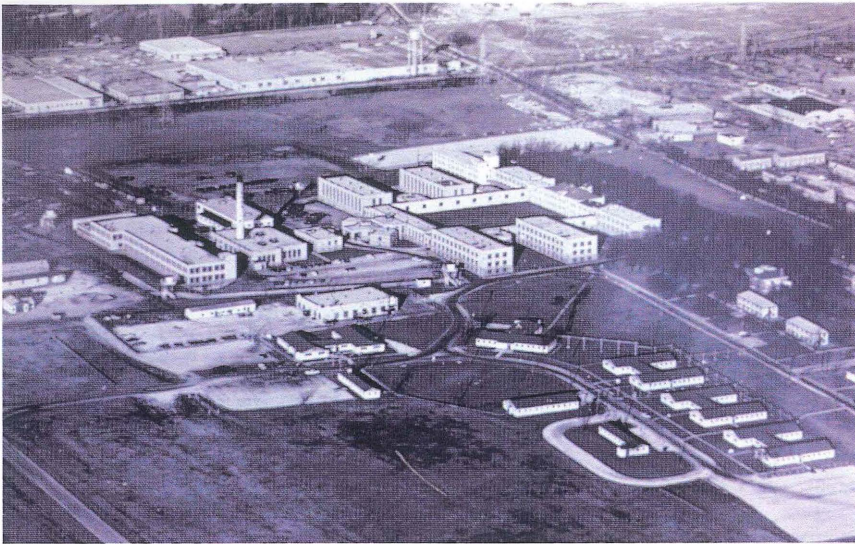


Alley Between 34th and 35th Streets, 5600 Block

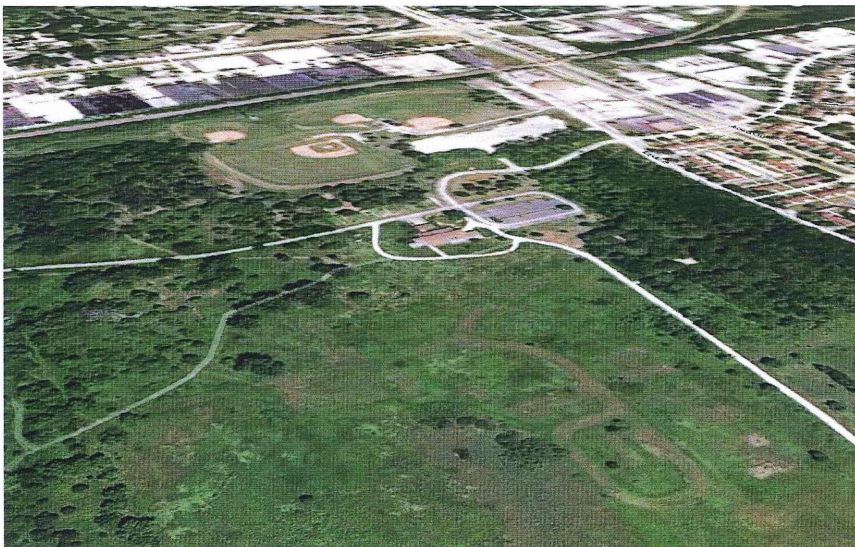


Alley Between 34th and 35th Streets, 5600 Block

HAVENWOODS STATE FOREST



1964. Aerial Photograph.
Wisconsin State Park System, Havenwoods State Forest



2012. Aerial Photograph. Google Earth.
Wisconsin State Park System, Havenwoods State Forest

Ghosts

As we make grand cities, we clear land, pave surfaces and break ground to create foundations. Can we turn back time and recreate nature from once human-dominated plots of land?

Previous human interventions have left their marks in the Havenwoods State Forest. After massive amounts of paving were removed and foundations buried, there still remains ghostly images of the past.



1974. Photograph. Havenwoods State Forest, Milwaukee.
Wisconsin State Park System, Havenwoods State Forest

*"I dwell in a lonely house I
know that vanished many
a summer ago, and left no
trace but the cellar walls,
and a cellar in which the
daylight falls."*

~Robert Frost

Frost, R. (1915). "Ghost House." In *A Boy's Will* (pgs. 12-13). New York: Henry Holt and Company.



1986. Photograph. Havenwoods State Forest, Milwaukee.
Wisconsin State Park System, Havenwoods State Forest

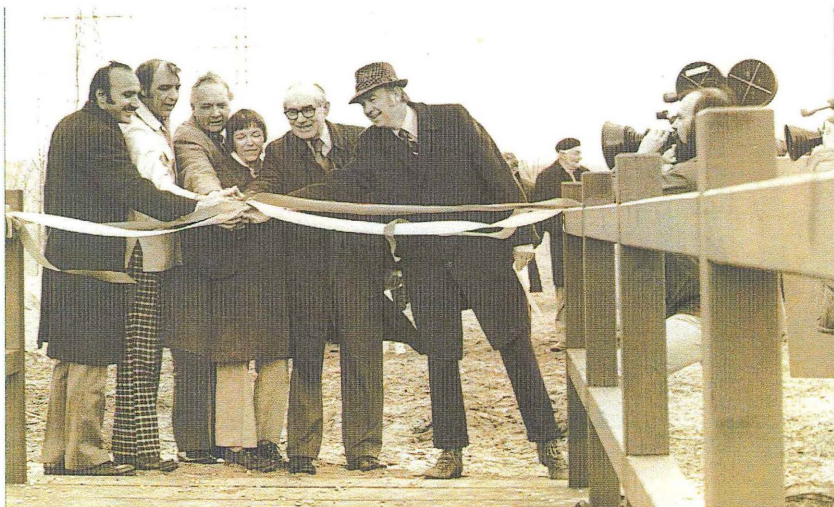
Angels

As part of its reforestation program, Havenwoods offers opportunities to local school children to plant trees. The kids act as angels responsible for the stewardship of the landscape.

It is important to allow room for nature within our cities. We continuously invite plants, animals and insects back into the cityscape as we attempt to balance human density with local ecosystems.



1984. Photograph. Havenwoods State Forest, Milwaukee.
Wisconsin State Park System, Havenwoods State Forest



1976. Photograph. Havenwoods State Forest, Milwaukee.
Wisconsin State Park System, Havenwoods State Forest

*“For I’d rather be thy child
and pupil, in the forest wild,
than be the king of men
elsewhere.”*

~Henry David Thoreau

Thoreau, D. (1895). “Nature.” In *Poems of Nature*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co.



INSECTS

The resurgence of the prairie and forms of life that inhabit it are signs that nature and the city are not separate entities.



*“They are alive and well
somewhere;
The smallest sprout shows
there is really no death,
and if ever there was it led
forward life.”*

~Walt Whitman

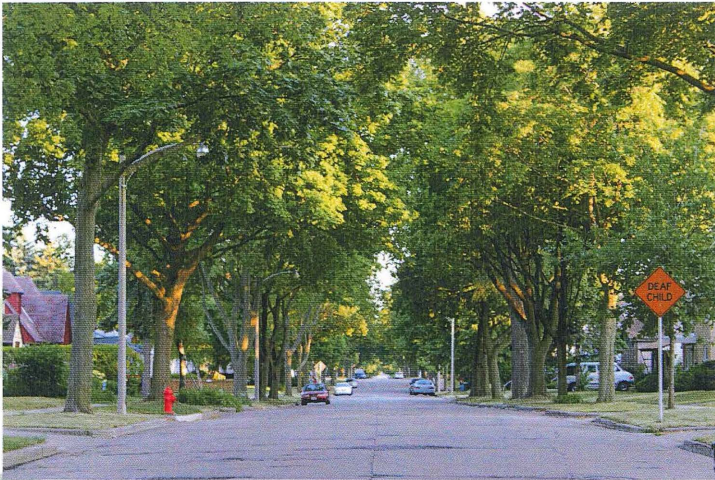


Whitman, W. (1855). “Song of Myself.” In *Leaves of Grass*. Boston: Thayer and Eldridge.

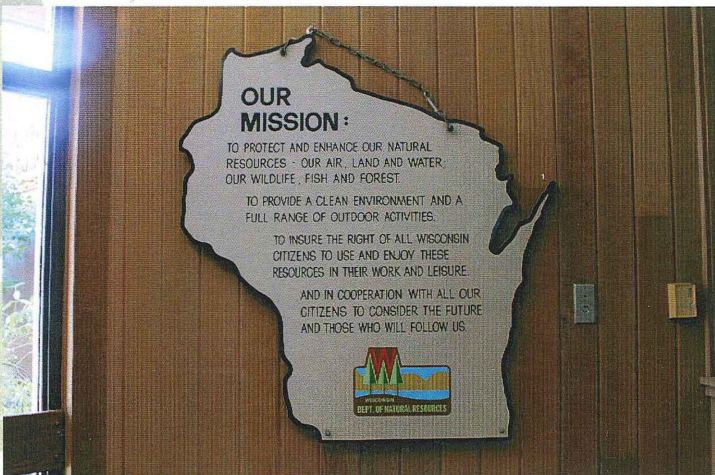




CONTESTED NATURE



Where do you see nature in Thurston Woods? “We see nature all over the place,” according to Lorie Koehler. Many of us see nature in the shady and cool tree-lined streets, the birds in yards and in Havenwoods. But how many of us have thought about how nature here took form and how much of a push and pull there still is between man and nature in the neighborhood?



The landscape of Thurston Woods is man-made, sometimes working with nature and the natural shape and movement of the land, sometimes in conflict. Early maps of the area show the land after the first settlers cleared it of the standing forest: what are now Havenwoods and Berryland are wetlands, much of the remaining space was farm fields. Later, these areas became military installations, veterans' housing, residences and industrial sites. We have modified nature to suit our needs.



However, nature isn't passive. Heavy rains flood low lying basements and change the level and quality of Lincoln Creek; lack of rain turns lawns brown. Wildlife is attracted to yards; some species welcome, some, like squirrels at the bird feeder, are not. Plants find a bit of soil and grow through concrete in the alley, or creep up the garage, or erase all but a trace of former Nike missile silos. The push and pull, the tug-of-war, between man and nature continues and is played out in the streets, yards and alleys of Thurston Woods.

In *The Granite Garden*, Ann Whiston Spirn notes that we have viewed nature and the city as two distinct and separate elements rather than nature being “an essential force that permeates the city...the city must be recognized as part of nature and designed accordingly.” By seeing and understanding the fundamental connection between nature and neighborhood, each resident can make personal home and yard “design” actions, perhaps taking advantage of the Agape Center’s rain barrel program, or giving over a portion of the lawn to native plantings that are drought tolerant, or simply cleaning leaves from a storm sewer come fall. Each small act diminishes the tug-of-war between man and nature.

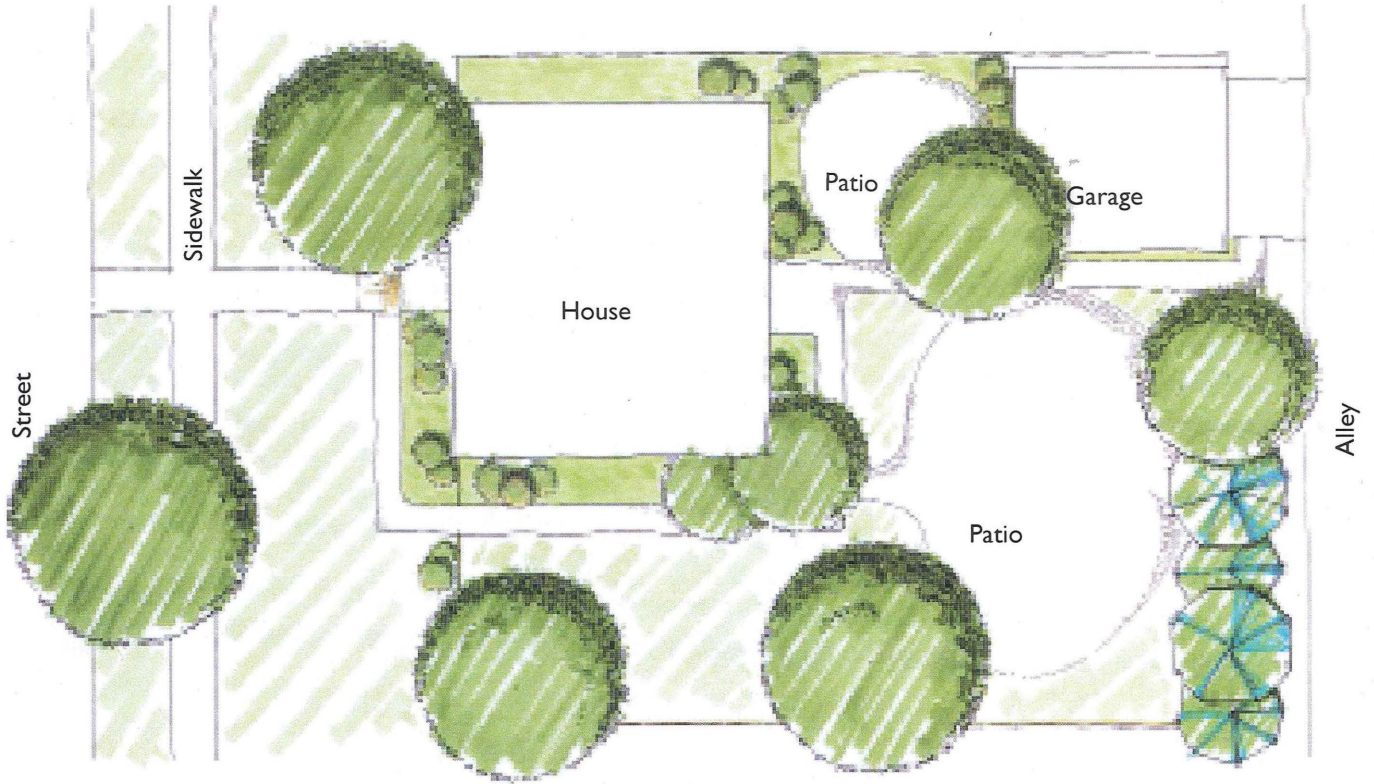


Spirn, Ann Whiston. *The Granite Garden: Urban Nature and Human Design*. New York: Basic Books (1984).

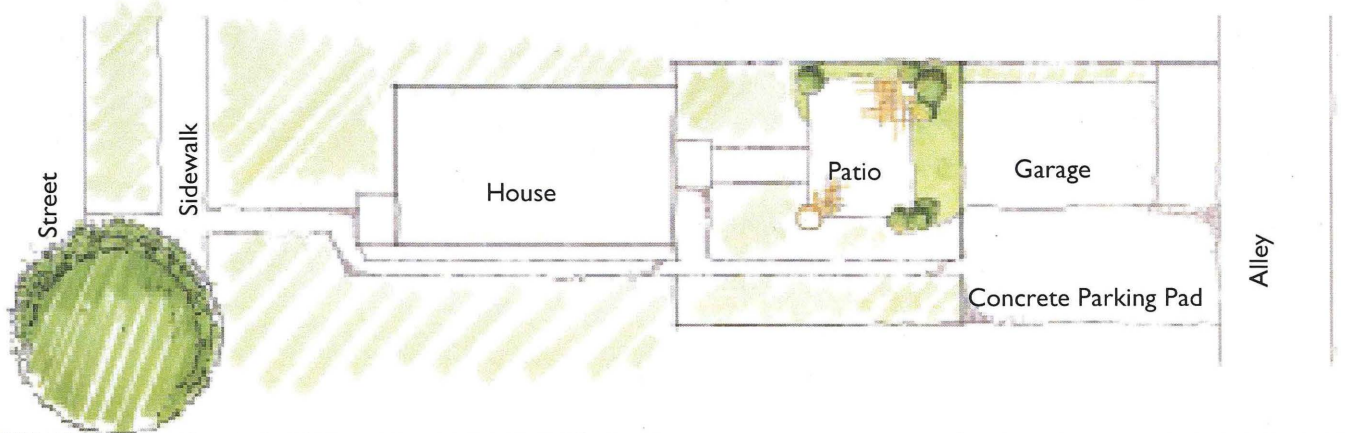


LAND PLOTS

Mavis and Tom's Site Plan



John and Mary's Site Plan



0 5 10 15 feet

The Yard as Part of the Home

Looking at the two site plans at left, a viewer can clearly see differences in how homeowners choose to organize and use their outdoor space. Priorities and interests are highlighted in the arrangement of a back yard.

Mavis uses her yard as a public space where she hosts her guests. She has ensured that every inch of her backyard looks beautiful, inviting, warm and cozy. The space is somewhat formal and organized into separate areas, almost rooms, through the double lot yard. Mavis focuses on her guests' relaxing experience.

In contrast, John and Mary's backyard is more of an extension of the private areas of their home and they use it as such. The yard must cater to their dog and son. Therefore, this space has been designed with the family in mind: examples include a chain link fence with child-proof locks and a patio made of brick that can be used for family events.

APPENDIX

House Histories:

Additional Information

Address: 5716 N. 41st St.

Legal Property Description: West and Company's Addition to North Milwaukee (G.A.) in SW ¼, section 25-8-21, block 6 lot 22.

Construction Date: 1949

Significant Interior Features: Unique archways framing hallway entrances and stairwell; First floor: 576 sq. ft. (Attic 285). There are original plywood doors on several closets and crawl spaces throughout the house.

General Exterior Description: Cape Cod style on a 3600 square foot lot. Aluminum/Vinyl siding

Address: 5826 N 38th St.

Legal Property- Neighborhood: 0900, Plat: 17-022, Assessment County: Milwaukee, Class: Residential, tax key: 1700008000, Zoning: RS6, Aldermanic District 1, Census 010-208

Construction Date: 1929/1930

Significant Interior Features: Plaster detailing in entry room and dining room, building kitchen cabinetry, evidence of upstairs apartment

General Exterior Description: Half-Hip Roof, Asphalt Shingles

Address: 5734 N. 39th St.

Legal Property Description: West & Company addition to North Milwaukee (G.A.) in SW 1/4 sec 25-8-21 block 4 lots 26-27 & N. 15' lot 25.

Construction Date: 1929

Significant Interior Features: Piano windows in front room and original hardwood floors, evidence of former baseboards and shoe moldings.

General Exterior Description: New siding (T1-11 boards) on entire house and garage. Also has a new porch with railings and brick veneer. The date for the second floor addition is unknown, but the roofing was extended to the top of the first floor, with all second floor windows recessed into the roof.

Address: 5710 N. 35th St.

Legal Property: Neighborhood: 0900, Plat: 17-022, Assessment County: Milwaukee, Class: Residential, tax key: 1700008000, Zoning: RS6, Aldermanic District 1, Census 010-208

Construction Date: 1947

Significant Interior Features: Fiberboard instead of drywall.

General Exterior Description: Roof, gabled with asphalt shingles. Wooden framework.

Address: 5825 N. 38th St.

Legal Property: Neighborhood: 0900, Plat: 17-117, Assessment County: Milwaukee, Class: Residential, tax key: 1719550000, Zoning: RS6, Aldermanic District 1, Census 010-402

Construction Date: 1951

Significant Interior Features: Fiber board instead of dry wall, prefabricated.

General Exterior Description: Roof: gable; 210 asphalt shingles, 5/16 plyscore, 15# felt, and plywood. Wooden frame.

Address: 5879 N. 34th St.

Legal Property: Neighborhood: 0900, Plat: 17-022, Assessment County: Milwaukee, Class: Residential, tax key: 1700008000, Zoning: RS6, Aldermanic District 1, Census 010-208

Construction Date: 1950

Significant Interior Features: Fiber board instead of dry wall, prefabricated.

General Exterior Description: Gabled, asphalt shingles, Exterior brick

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