

303 N. WORTH

Queen Anne
Built 1892



The the oldest house on this year's house tour has, in a way, come full circle. It was built by a pair of brothers for their parents, and now is owned by a couple who have renovated it to meet the needs of their modern family.

Joel and Stevens Hayward, builders and contractors, constructed 303 N. Worth in 1892 for their parents, Joel and Sarah Hayward. The home cost \$1,500. The Hayward Brothers built numerous homes in the early 1890s on Elgin's near west side, usually building, occupying and then selling the houses.

In 1899 the Haywards sold the property to Grant Mahan and his wife. Mahan was an employee of Brethren Publishing House, the publishing arm of Church of the Brethren. This Protestant denomination is still based here

today, and its Highland Avenue church is the registration site for the tour this year. The Mahans owned the house until 1908, but it stayed with Church of the Brethren members longer. A family named Metz, in which Harry Metz was a Brethren Publishing House employee, bought the house and lived in it during 1909 and 1910.

A widow from New York, Annette Hinman, purchased 303 N. Worth in 1911 and converted it into two apartments. Among her tenants were printer John Hamilton, who worked for Brethren Publishing House, and his wife, Sara.

Hinman died in 1926; her brother inherited the house and kept its two-apartment structure, but didn't live there. In 1934, bachelor John Heslin, a retired landlord, purchased the property. One of Heslin's earlier professions in Elgin, selling

meat from a wagon, is now consigned to the past.

The home had many tenants in the intervening years until the present owners bought it in 2000. Among them were employees of such prominent Elgin employers as retailer E.A. Logan, Elgin National Watch Factory, Illinois Watch Case Co., Lamp Construction, Elgin Sweeper Co. and the U-46 school district.

When Eric and Danielle Pepa bought 303 N. Worth in 2000, the previous owners, who were divorcing, were in the middle of remodeling it. The upstairs still had a kitchen and “five little rooms,” Eric says.

An architect by profession, Eric and computer consultant Danielle wanted to return their new house back to single-family status and update it for their family, which includes two sons: one in middle school and one in high school.

They saw many possibilities in the house when they bought it; it was large enough for their family, but was “oddly arranged upstairs.” Besides removing the kitchen from the upstairs, the Pepas completely renovated the first-floor kitchen, choosing Bethlehem marble for the countertops that has fossils embedded in it. The couple converted the upstairs parlor into a bedroom, and the master bedroom now includes a modern bathroom suite. They reconfigured the attic space, which the Pepas described as “large and unusable,” to be a play area for their boys.

Eric and Danielle both loved old houses, but hadn't previously had much experience living in them. They wanted a house “with character.” Danielle grew up in subdivisions in Buffalo, N.Y., then Pittsburgh and finally the Chicago area. Eric was raised in the Chicago suburbs. The couple previously owned a house in Elgin's Cobbler's Crossing subdivision, but Eric had had experience renovating and putting additions on older homes in his profession. He says his love for old houses grew over time.

Danielle says her favorite aspects of the house are its trim work and the master suite. Eric also appreciates the trim work and master bedroom, and names the attic as a special feature.

Architectural Notes

Queen Anne-Style houses consisted of several different variations. The nature of the style, which encourages asymmetrical facades and a variety of roof configurations, led to great flexibility in the layout of the building and ways it could be augmented with porches and a great variety of trim details.

The house is typical of the Queen Annes being built in this neighborhood by the Hayward Brothers in the 1880s and 1890s. It is a bit simpler in design and detailing than high-style Queen Annes, which have features such as turrets, elaborate wall cladding, and porches trimmed with ornate newel posts and balusters. However, it retains the essential elements of the style.

Note the large wraparound porch, and the way the visual effect is carried on by extending the roof line along the full width of the front façade. Also note the cutaway bay windows on the first floor under the porch roof, and the decorative shingles in the gable ends. In keeping with the style, there are a variety of window sizes. The roof consists of three intersecting gable ends that merge into a steeply pitched center section. There is also a secondary porch located off the kitchen.

2 DOORS DOWN ↓

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