

391 Jefferson Ave.

[Upon entering the home, please go directly to the left, into the living room.]

Most of the homes on tour today reveal a blending of eras—of old and new, antique and modern. This Victorian home is a synthesis of contrasts—the preservation of past practices need not mean a deprivation of convenience and comfort! Here we find residents who can go upstairs to soak in the original tin bathtub or relax in the basement where the coal room is now their sauna.

This house was built in 1896 for the Edward Lawrence family. Lawrence was born in Lancashire, England, in 1819 and settled near Burlington, Illinois, in 1850. A farmer, he retired and moved to Elgin with his family. His widow, Lissey, lived here for many years after the death of her husband in 1902. Their great-grandson today lives in Sycamore.

The home's late Queen Anne style is exhibited by the turret, a variety of roof lines, and clapboard with fish scale and butt shingles above. Other notable features are the banding of shingles carried from the front gable into the turret and the incised diagonal corners on the first floor with a cantilevered second floor.

The original porch continued across the entire front and around the east side of the home. The current owners rebuilt the porch in March, not restoring the full porch because too much light would be cut from the living room. In the fall, the whole house will be painted with a new paint scheme of pale blue background and deep burgundy trim. The Eastlake carving will be highlighted with pale beige.

Most Queen Anne porches seem to "greet their guests," as do this porch and entryway which provide a warm welcome. In the foyer, the fine detailing is visible in the staircase with its decorative newel posts and carved owl and rosette details, the beautiful oak balusters, and coffered underside of the staircase.

In the living room is one of six original gas sconces (gas pipes are still underneath). Three were converted to electricity. The decorative arch into dining room shows a simple trim and casing, re-

flecting the change in detailing philosophy from Victorian detailing in its prime which was more flamboyant.

The dining room presents a rarity. On the floor, near the west wall, an early thermostat provided control of the dampers. There are still two holes in the floor for the chains used to open and close the damper while coal was burning.

In the powder room off the kitchen, the corner sink is original, but brought down from the upstairs. An original light fixture hangs in this ex-pantry. The kitchen has the original built-in cabinets, wainscoting in pantry, and gas light fixtures converted to electricity.

The back staircase leads to the second floor and directly to a third-floor attic which the last owners converted to a den. The sun-filled room displays a creative use of space, especially for an old home.

The tin tub awaits in the second-floor bath. Bordered by wainscoting in the room, the novelty is resting in an enlarged bathroom, which, when remodeled to add a shower and full lavatory, greatly reduced the size of the adjacent small bedroom. The original light fixture also adorns this bathroom.

Not on tour, the basement was recently remodeled as recreation/family room offering family and guests plenty of up-to-date diversions. Besides the sauna, there are game tables, a bar, and the most current addition . . . the Nintendo area.

