HOUSE HISTORIES
Floor Two

Suspected period one wall dividing the kitchen and dining area.

Floor One

0 1 5 10 15 Feet
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 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

0 1 5 10 15 Feet
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.

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

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.

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
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.
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.

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 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
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.