



HISTORIC CHICAGO BUNGALOW ASSOCIATION



Paul Farris was about to give up. He had been searching for a bungalow for quite some time. In fact, he had spent the last several months trying to juggle the sale of his downtown condominium while hunting for a new home which met his criteria. He was certain it was a bungalow he wanted after having seen a program about the well-designed, historic homes on television. After months of searching with no luck, he was nearly ready to stop looking. Around the same time, he received an

offer for his condominium and decided to accept it, despite the fact he hadn't yet secured a new residence.

In a stroke of luck, Paul checked the realtor's website one more time. It was then that he noticed the ad for a one-and-a-half story, single-family home in the Austin area. The ad was so recent the photo hadn't yet been added. Nonetheless, something told him he should go see this house. His instinct paid off--the house was just what he was looking for. "I knew this was it when I saw it," he said, describing his first impression of the house. Today, Paul is the owner of a lovely, red brick bungalow on the 1700 block of North Nagle Avenue.

The bungalow is immediately noticeable for its impressive front façade. A projecting bay adorned with multi-light windows pushes out into the front lawn, creating the impression of a massive and very solid structure. Battered piers at each "corner" of the bay underscore the effect, lending a decidedly bulky feel to the house, while the low-pitched roof gives the sense that the home is firmly anchored to the ground.

The house was built in 1927 for J. Walter Shea and designed by local architect Lyman J. Allison. Mr. Allison was a Wisconsin native of Scottish descent. He had a successful practice located in downtown Chicago and designed numerous homes throughout the city and surrounding areas, among them many bungalows and apartment buildings. Although some of the structures he designed date from the early part of the Twentieth century, his primary period of activity was from the mid-1920s through the 1930s. It was during this time that he designed the bungalow on North Nagle Avenue.

Walter Shea purchased the property from Nels



Johnson in July 1927. On August 4, a building permit for a brick residence at a cost of \$7000 was taken out. Construction began later that month. The home was not officially finished until January 1928, although interior plasterwork was taking place in September of 1927.

An Illinois native, Walter Shea was of European decent. His mother came from Canada, while his father had emigrated from Ireland. Mr. Shea lived in the home with his wife Bessie and daughter Peggy. Additionally, they shared their home with a 64-year-old aunt, Anne Murray. Ms. Murray, a widow who emigrated from Ireland in 1884, was employed as a servant in a private home. Both Mr. Shea and his wife worked in the public school system, he as a principal and his wife as a teacher. The home remained in the hands of the Shea family until it was sold to its present owner, just over seventy years after its construction.



As a result, the home, which was certified with the Historic Chicago Bungalow Association in August 2003, retains many lovely original fixtures. Among these are the interior cove molding throughout the first-floor living space, beadboard woodwork in the hallway, and wall sconces in both the dining room and the living room. Moreover, the home retains its original multi-light wood windows, numerous doors with original hardware, and the original mailbox with key. In addition, Paul has the skeleton key for the doors.

Despite the number of attractive details that remain, Paul has been busy with maintenance and rehabilitation projects. In less than a year, he has already had the roof repaired, new gutters added and the interior floors resurfaced. He has begun painting the interior of the home with period-appropriate colors, stripping the woodwork and repairing plumbing. Furthermore, he has done work in the kitchen and basement. However, his ideas and plans for the house don't end there. In addition, he would like to finish the attic, work on landscaping and replace the garage. "The list just keeps growing," he says with a smile. "Everywhere I look, I see something I want to take care of. It just takes time."