



HISTORIC CHICAGO BUNGALOW ASSOCIATION



For Michelle and Ricardo Magana, their Gage Park bungalow has been a labor of love. Although they have owned the home for only two years, the couple spent the first year-and-a-half of that time intensively rehabilitating the interior of the house, located on the 5500 block of South Francisco Avenue. Only recently, have they been able to relax and enjoy their home. Although that may sound like a long time to live in a “work-in-progress,” for them it was worth it. “We’re so happy with the house. We love its charm,” they explain.

Thomas Hepburn constructed the octagonal, red brick bungalow in 1927. Mr. Hepburn was an Illinois native of Canadian decent, who was by profession a carpenter. On October 25, 1927, Mr. Hepburn applied for a permit to build four one-and-a-half story residences at a cost of \$5000 each. These were all located on the 5500 block of S. Francisco Avenue. Construction began shortly thereafter, and by April 5th the following year, the buildings were officially complete.

In September 1928, Mr. Hepburn sold the property to William Ory and his wife, Kathryn. By 1930, however, the house was owned by James Johnston, a 60-year-old immigrant from Northern Ireland. He lived in the house with his wife Annie and his two adult sons James and William. Also residing there were his brother-in-law Walter McKibbon, his sister-in-law Jennie Murphy and her children, Irene and Robert.

James and Annie, both born in Northern Ireland, were married in 1899. In 1907, the year their eldest son James was born, the couple was in Glasgow, Scotland. However, by the time of the birth of their second son William in 1909, they had returned to Northern Ireland. In 1911, James immigrated to the United States. Ten years later, he sent for his wife and two sons, then aged 14 and 12. That same year, Irene and Robert Murphy, James’ niece and nephew, immigrated as well. Walter McKibbon, James’ brother-in-law, arrived two years later in 1923.

By the time the Maganas acquired the house, it had passed through the hands of several owners. The most recent owner had made changes they were eager to remove. “He had put paneling on the wall in the living room,” Ricardo explained, “and there were lots of small holes in the walls.” The former owner had also owned a dog, whose “messes” had damaged the hardwood floor hidden underneath the carpeting, which they were also eager to restore.



The couple spent many hours refinishing the floors and plastering the walls themselves. They removed all the 1970s era kitchen furnishings and completely rehabbed the kitchen. Furthermore, they updated the HVAC systems of the house. And, of course, they spent countless hours painting.

Despite all this, the couple still has a list of new projects they would like to begin. “We would really like to redo the bathroom. Same thing with the bedrooms,”



Michelle explained. They would also like to finish both the attic and the basement, adding more bedrooms



in each location. For the time being, however, the couple agrees they would like to enjoy their hard work a little while longer before digging out the tarps and heavy equipment.

The Maganas certified their bungalow in February 2003. They have taken advantage of the appliance voucher incentive to purchase a new refrigerator for their new kitchen.