Francis & Abbie Solon House Open House

On October 20 and 21, almost 600 people toured the historic Solon House, which was open to the public for the first time. The Open House marked the beginning of marketing the house to a preservation-minded buyer. (See related article.) PACA has spent the last two years stabilizing the house and preparing it for sale. The work has included sorting and properly distributing items that remained in the house, painting the cupola, repairing roof damage caused by a chimney collapse and removing two unstable chimneys, rebuilding the service wing’s eaves and built-in gutters, rebuilding or repairing the main roof’s four-foot overhanging eaves and built-in gutters, and other roof repairs. This fall, a new silver colored standing-seam metal roof will be installed along with new downspouts. In addition, the finial will be reinstalled atop the cupola roof with a new weathervane and lightning protection. Other work on the property included removing massive amounts of overgrown volunteer trees and bushes, battling invasive weeds, and spreading wood chips.

Many PACA members have volunteered their time and sweat in this major preservation project. At the risk of leaving someone out, PACA wishes to thank the following for their time and efforts in helping us with the Solon House Preservation Project: Bob Swisher, Betty Swisher, Dan Leasure, Darrel Foste, Suzanne Ashley-Wannemuehler, Ann Schmidt, Jerry Schmidt, Hank Kaczmarski, Jedd Swisher, Jeff Gordon, Bill Rose, Greg Hargus, Chris Enck, Michael Markstahler, Carol Knepp, Kent Snodgrass, Rex Knepp, Elisabeth Jenicek, Susan Frobish, Judy Gratkins, Catherine Barbercheck, Karen Kummer, Kathleen Jones, Trent Shepard, Ed Wilhite, Diane Wilhite, Kathy Nicholas, Robert Nemeth, Vicki Burkhalter, Brian Duffield, Sarah Nemeth, Tom Garza, Mike Richards, City of Champaign Public Works Department, Champaign County Public Service Workers, Bill May, Campus Sportswear, Inc., UI Architecture Class 419, UI Architecture Class 519, Illinois Department of Conservation, Suzanne Bissonnette, Rex Kummer, Champaign Unit 4, Champaign Fire Department, Susan Salzman, Anthony Bamert and Associates, and Bob Craft.

PACA Board Member, Carol Knepp, leads a tour of the Francis and Abbie Solon House. The open house was the prelude to marketing the house for sale.

From the President

I would like to thank PACA’s Executive Director Karen Kummer, the PACA Board of Directors, the Solon House Project Committee, the Salvage Warehouse volunteers, and all the other volunteers who made the open house a grand success. Without all of the help it could not have happened.

Close to 600 people went through the house, and PACA raised $5,400 toward the cost of the new roof, plus adding new more members! Just about everyone who toured the house had a story about the Solons or the house. It is a shame that we did not have a tape recorder to save the stories. Their wonderful memories made the tour even more worth while.

Thanks again,
Jerry Schmidt
PACA President
Francis and Abbie Solon House
Buyer Information

The house will be auctioned to pre-qualified buyers with a minimum starting bid of $325,000.

All bidders must be pre-qualified financially (through a letter from a financial institution).

All bidders must be approved through a prequalification application submitted to PACA by December 1, 2007.

An auction will be held in December 2007 at a time agreed upon by all pre-qualified and approved bidders.

Prequalification bid packets are available from PACA at a cost of $15.00.

For further information or to obtain a prequalification bid packet, contact PACA at 217-359-7222; pacaesdir@insightbb.com; P.O. Box 2575, Champaign, IL 61825.

Heritage Grants Awarded

At their June meeting, the PACA Board of Directors awarded the following Heritage Grants:

- *Urban-Champaign Independent Media Center*, Historic window repair workshop supplies ($1,000)
- *University YMCA*, On-going repointing project ($1,500)
- *Channing-Murray Foundation*, Paint ceilings and walls ($378)
- *Edison Middle School*, Purchase video camcorder and digital cameras for history and architecture class project
- *Ilona Matkovski*, Urbana plat map documentation project ($360)

Historic Building Art Contest

The City of Urbana's Historic Preservation Commission hosted an art show and contest about historic preservation for local high school students during Preservation Month. Original student artwork and essays were displayed in May at the P.A.C.A. Register-listed Lincoln Square Village. First and second place winning submissions were highlighted in the June-July newsletter.

This project was made possible by the following sponsors: Art Coop, Busey Bank, Cinema Gallery, International Galleries, the Preservation and Conservation Association, the Urbana Business Association, the Urban Historic Preservation Commission, Lincoln Square Village, and the City of Urbana.

The Fairy House
Zach Korol, third place

Along Busey Avenue in Urbana, Illinois lies a house better fit for forest gnomes than Urbana residents. This cottage is known as the Fairy House, a charming little home built by Joseph Royer, a famous architect who lived in Urbana. Royer was hired by the Trustees of the Hubbard Estate to develop the area for T.S. Hubbard's Elmwood addition to Urbana.

Royer fulfilled the terms of this Elmwood agreement by building and designing a large stucco building in 1905 next door to the Fairy House, which he built in 1923. This small house has gone by many names. Some of them include the Gingerbread House, the Hansel and Gretie Cottage, and perhaps most commonly the Fairy House. Making this small cottage seem even more like it was something out of a fairy tale was the first occupant, Mrs. Ella Danely, who was Royer's mother-in-law. Mrs. Danely was also called "Grandma Danely." She would bake cookies for the neighborhood kids while Adelaide, Royer's wife, told the children stories about magical creatures that "inhabited the Fairy House."

Royer built this house for Mrs. Danely. She lived in the Fairy House while Royer and his wife lived in the large stucco house next door. A later owner of the Fairy House was Ms. St. Claire who, until 1994, was the owner of the house.
She once said, “When I first moved into the Fairy House, my husband jokingly told me that there was only room for one person.” Later, in 1972, Mrs. St. Claire’s husband died. “I didn’t know that the one person would be me,” Ms. St. Claire recalls. The current resident of the Fairy house is Alethea Taylor.

The “romantic quality” of the Fairy house has been kept alive all these years by Adelaide Royer. She wrote a book called “The Fairy House” containing a collection of short children’s stories about the house. This was one book in a series of books by Adelaide called “The Round Window Series” (one of the windows in the fairy house is round) about houses in the Urbana-Champaign area.

Seeming very simple, this cottage is actually made and designed with many different materials. The Fairy House is made from stucco walls and reddish-brown wood for the shingles on the roof, the wood lining the windows, and for the thick, sturdy front door. One of most striking features of the Fairy House that also adds to its magic is the raw fieldstone that projects out of the stone chimney that is not set in line with the other brick. Another captivating feature is the stone arch above the door, also made with raw fieldstone. Completing the picture of this woodland house is the roof of the house which is extremely tall and has a curved lip at the bottom.

The flora growing in the house’s small yard is actually in abundance. The yard is filled with hundreds of tulips, a crab tree, and a tall pine tree. This breathtaking yard is surrounded by a low brick fence covered in ivy and a red gate opening to a meandering path which leads to the front door.

This small house is full of style, but the name that was given to the style of this cottage is English Revival Style. English revival style means that the house has a sloping, uneven roof and is made of stucco, brick or stone walls. The house has a large stone chimney near the front door, and has small, paneled windows. The cottage is asymmetrical with low arched doors, and has steep gables (the places where a roof comes to a point). All of these characteristics fit Royer’s Fairy House, making it a perfect example of an English Revival home. Royer even added some of his own details to the house to make it look more like an English shepherd’s cottage from the 1700’s.

The contrast between the Mission Style house where Royer resided and the Fairy House shows how skilled he was with a variety of distinctive styles. This is likely why he was asked by T.S. Hubbard to build the estate in the first place and why he was called upon to design many other Urbana buildings such as Urbana High School. Royer was a success as an architect and added to the diversity of Urbana through architectural eyes.

Thanks to Anna Hochhalter, Public Arts Coordinator, City of Urbana, for the information in this article.

New Urbana Landmarks

In June, the Urbana City Council designated two historic homes as landmarks. The Sutton House (1889), 502 W. Elm, was built by Mrs. Elizabeth Sutton, the widow of Royal A. Sutton, former mayor and the “brick king of Urbana.” Next door at 504 W. Elm is the Freeman House (1902), built by Gus and Alice Freeman. Gus was a railroad engineer and later owner of an early movie theater (the Princess). Alice was the daughter of banker Simeon Busey. The architect of their house was Joseph Royer.

In November, the 800 block of W. Main was designated the city’s third, and largest (14 houses), historic district.

---

P.A.C.A. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY
- Adult $15
- Student $10
- Senior Citizen $10
- Family $20
- Corporate $75
- Additional Contribution

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO PACA

TYPE
- New
- Renewal

INFORMATION:
NAME:
ADDRESS:
PHONE:
E-MAIL:

PACA
Box 2575, Station A
Champaign, IL 61825
WWW.PACACC.ORG
217 359 7222

Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.
Salvage VIP's
Rich Cahill
Betty Swisher
Darrel Foste
Bob Swisher
Mike Miller
Dane Leasure
Samantha Malloy
Suzanne Ashley-Wannemuehler
Jerry Schmidt
Elisabeth Foste
Mike Richards
Al Friederick
Dan Leasure
Lee Stoops

Salvage Donations
Champaign County Public Works
Walter Ezell
Scott Nelson
Charter Members (1981-1983)
James & Mare Payne
Ken Miller
Fantastic Supporters (Over Twenty Year Members)
Steve & Kathy Roemmel
Bruce Hutchings
Dave Rear
Eleven to Twenty Year Members
Bill DeJarnette
Monica J. Cox
Rita Gentry
Ed & Diane Wilhite
Kevin Fahey & Ann Bergeron
Kay Bock & David Irwin
Community Development Department,
City of Urbana (Corporate)
Joan Zagorski

Remember to check your mailing label for your membership renewal date. The date shown indicates when you last renewed; membership runs for one year from that date.

Mount Hope Cemetery Tour
The Champaign-Urbana Theatre Company (CUTC), and the Preservation and Conservation Association sponsored a second walking tour of historic Mount Hope Cemetery on October 7. Over seventy-five people braved unusually HOT weather to take tours, led by PACA and CUTC volunteers, which delved into the history of the cemetery and grave stone architecture. CUTC actors also portrayed prominent “residents” and explained their role in the history of Champaign, Urbana, and the University of Illinois. Our thanks go to the CUTC, the actors, and tour guides.

Thanks to: Neil Lasater, Perry Morris, Susan Appel, Allen Avner, Rich Cahill, Wendy Harris, Kathy Murphy, Mary Claire Smith, Allyson Dunlap, Sally Denhart, David Ruzic, Kevin Collins, Frank Thomas, Pat Thomas, Kelly Warner, Phil Strang, Diane Pritchard, Doug Rotke, Kent Snodgrass, Mount Hope Cemetery and Jim Hudson.

Five to Ten Year Members
Caren & Jesse Spencer-Smith
Harold & Margaret Balbach
Kathy & Jonathan Swedler
Todd & Beth Satterthwaite
Bill Roberts
Merle Staufter
Katie Davidson & Rick Horton
Ann Zahner
One to Four Year Members
Josh & Ashley Pollet
Dianna Visek
Mary Ann Bunyan
Ted & Stephanie Fisher
Jay Diffendorfer & Amy King
Ed & Diane Wilhite
Ellen Beattie
Kay Bock & David Irwin
Melvyn Skvarla
Susan & Dave Warner
New Members
Nancy Yeagle & Harold Allston
Sandra Talbott & Sheri Stinson
New Members
Erik Paulson
Robert & Cathy Inman
Mary-Auth
Mary Sue Amin
Anne Faber
Walter E. Hoffmann
Cara Day
Bill & Lisa Trimble
Barbara J. Payne
Eleven to Twenty Year Members
Michael Meadows & Jean Ascoli
Bill, Diana & Cori Williams
Jack Brown
Dorothy Baker
Suzanne Skaggs
Barbara Wysocki
Leonard E. Wilson
Christopher Lubinski
Vicky D. Smith

Preservation Matters: newsletter of the Preservation and Conservation Association
P.O. Box 2575, Station A, Champaign, IL 61825

Gerald Schmidt, President
Catherine Barbercheck, Vice-President
Sarah Nemeth, Treasurer
Elisabeth Jenike, Secretary
Karen Lang Kummer, Exec. Director

359-PACA: Telephone & Answering Service
website: pacacc.org
email: pacaccarr@insightbb.com
Printed on recycled paper

Preservation makes history live in the present.
6180133939 0034