

CITY PARADE OF HOMES

The Firecracker Model Goes Back to Basics

THRUSH DEVELOPMENT

By Barbara F. Bronstien

The 1990s are going back to basics, according to George Thrush, president of Thrush Development.

"People are more practical and careful with their expenditures," he said.

That's the philosophy behind the Firecracker—Thrush Development's entry in the City Parade of Homes.

"Our layout is really very simple, practical and functional," Thrush said. "We have really captured the spirit of the original Chicago cottages that were built after the Chicago Fire."

In fact, its builders call the 2-story home the hottest thing to hit town since the great Chicago Fire of 1871.

The 1,395-square-foot home has an authentic exterior with a high-pitched roof and masonry front. With its five-step front stoop—just like the ones Chicagoans of yesteryear perched upon—it would be at home on most any city lot.

"Our attempt has been to adhere fairly rigidly to the architectural concept of the city of Chicago," Thrush said. "Our house will fit in anywhere."

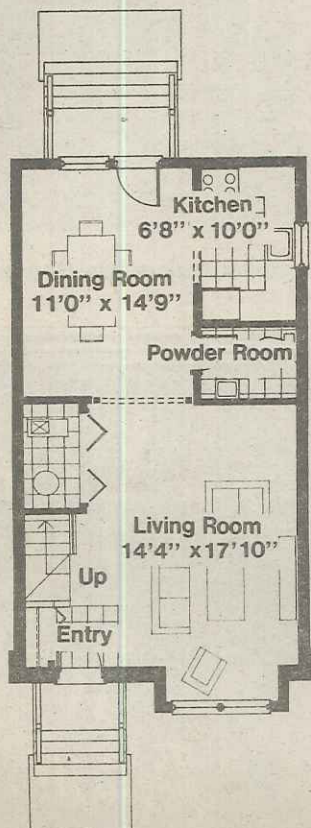
Inside the Firecracker, the layout has changed more to keep up with the times. In the 19th century, rooms would have been smaller and more numerous.

Today, the rooms are fewer but larger for contemporary families, which tend to be smaller than in the past.

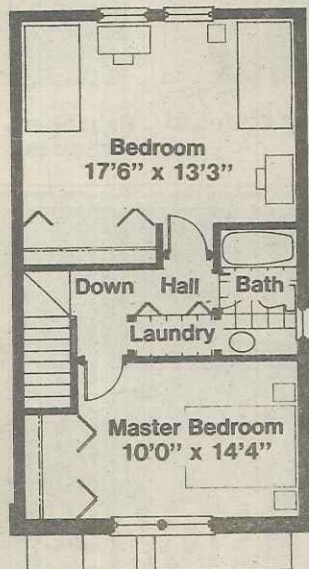
For example, a huge upstairs bedroom is designed to accommodate two young children with living and play space.

Priced at \$129,900, the home opens into a spacious living room with a bay window that is part of its classic bungalow appeal.

A large hall closet rests just inside the front door, and a utility closet on the side of the living



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

The Firecracker

Square feet: 1,395.

Bedrooms: 2; Baths: 1½.

Highlights: Large second bedroom/playroom; laundry area adjacent to bedrooms and bath.

Price: \$129,900.

room cleverly masquerades as another closet, behind the same folding doors.

The living room leads to the kitchen-dining area. A U-shaped kitchen opens into the dining room—that's-more-than-a-dining-room.

"This is where people are going

to spend an awful lot of time," Thrush said. "It's going to be used as a great room."

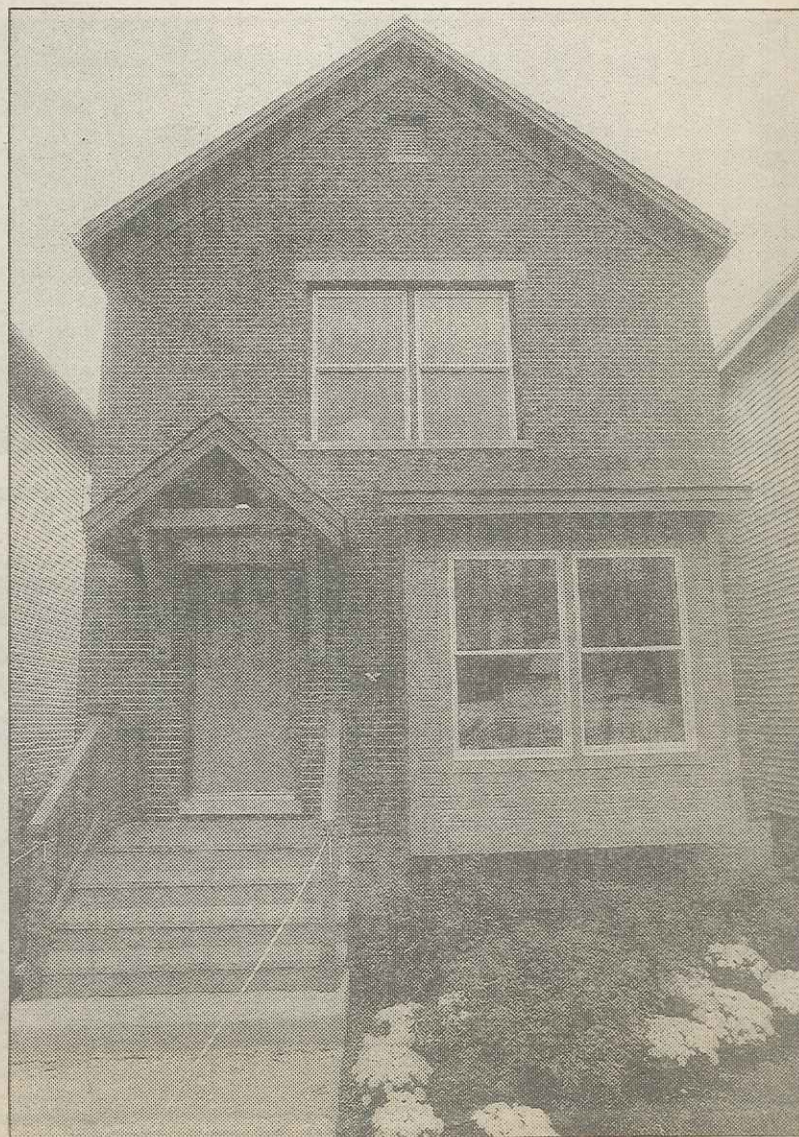
The kitchen has plenty of oak cabinets, a stainless-steel sink, gas range and a built-in dishwasher. The cabinets and counter space give it a bigger feel, and a window lets in the sun.

A back door leads from the dining room to a small deck. It faces a single-car concrete pad, a potential garage foundation.

The first-floor powder room sits between the living room and the kitchen.

The home is set up as a 2-bedroom. In this case, the bedroom has a large closet, room for the necessities, such as bunkbeds, and ample play space.

When the kids get older, a par-



SUN-TIMES/Bob Ringham

The Firecracker model by Thrush Development has an authentic Chicago cottage exterior with a high-pitched roof, masonry front and five-step front stoop.

titution and door could be added to split the bedroom into two more private bedrooms.

Another option for the immense 18-by-13-foot room is to use it as the master bedroom and designate the other bedroom as a second bedroom, guest or family room.

The model's standard-sized master bedroom also has a large wardrobe closet and its large windows face the street.

A short hall leads from the master bedroom to the bath and other bedroom.

Project manager Tom Roane

boasts the hall is the only "unused" space in the whole house.

The 6-panel doors on the rooms give the hallway a depth it wouldn't otherwise have. A laundry area is between the bedrooms, adjacent to the bath. "Obviously, that's where it's most useful," Thrush said, rather than the basement.

The bedrooms share a bath with a combination tub and shower.

The home has no basement or attic, but Thrush Development will add a basement to the Firecracker for \$8,000.

Chicago House Offers Flexibility

CREATIVE CONSTRUCTION

By Deborah Leigh Wood

Affordable and flexible are not mutually exclusive when applied to Chicago House XVI, Creative Construction Ltd.'s entry in the City Parade of Homes.

The home is contemporary, with 3 bedrooms, 1 bath and 2,500 square feet of space. It's priced at \$154,400.

As company President Bill Smith points out, owners get two residences for the price of one if they choose to turn the lower level into a rental apartment by adding a kitchen and bath. It already has a separate entrance.

Or, that space can serve as an office or studio that's accessible from the main house residence by stairs that already are framed out.

Smith likes to talk about details, the kind of details that make this very contemporary house distinctive. One such detail is the P-shaped breakfast

Chicago House XVI

Square feet: 2,500.

Bedrooms: 3; Baths: 1.

Highlights: A separate studio apartment space with separate entry on the lower level that can serve as a rental unit or as part of the main house when interior stairs are added; floor-to-ceiling windows on two sides.

Price: \$154,400.

bar, a quirky touch to a design element seen in many homes. The bar acts as a friendly divider between the kitchen and living room.

Because the ceilings are 9½ feet high, decorative or utilitarian items can be stocked on the top of the kitchen cabinets—which are a generous 42 inches high—without looking cramped.

In fact, openness and airiness are the hallmarks of this home.

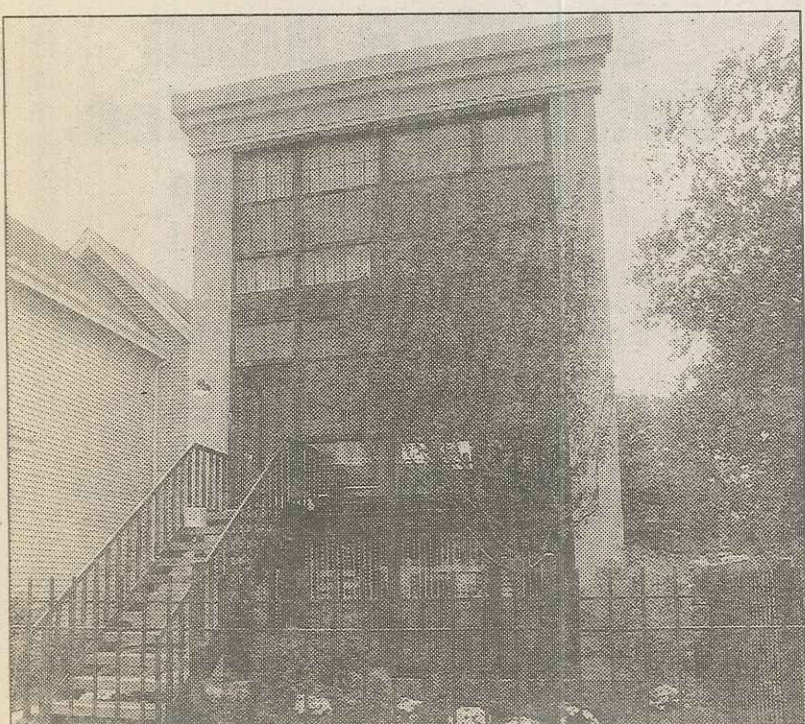
Between floor-to-ceiling windows, an open floor plan, natural hardwood floors and streamlined furnishings, one need never feel

confined to the space. Rather, because the entrances are at the top of a flight of steps, one feels perched above the neighborhood, or, as Smith said, "on top of things."

People who feel on top of things, Smith surmised, are people on the go. People on the go don't have a lot of time to make large sit-down dinner parties.

A cozy area replaces a formal dining room.

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SUN-TIMES/Bob Ringham

The Chicago House XVI model has a glass exterior.