



Tribune photo by Hung T. Vu
Mattie Perkins in the kitchen of her new home with Daniel Whitman of Whitman Architecture & Construction Inc., which built it.

Aftereffects

The first urban Parade of Homes still providing boost to city, buyers, builders

By John Handley

Chicago's Parade of Homes turned out to be a dream come true for Mattie Perkins.

"I found my dream home and I bought it," Perkins said proudly. "I went through all nine show homes, and this is the one I fell in love with."

Her choice — the \$180,000 Phoenix — also was popular with many of the 8,000 others who visited the Parade. It won the People's Choice award for best home at the event, held Sept. 5 to 23 in the Gap neighborhood on the city's Near South Side.

The whole Parade turned out to be a winner. Sponsored by the Home Builders Association of Greater Chicago, this was the first showcase of new homes in the city. Previously, Parades had been a suburban phenomenon.

"It was a wonderful example of bringing new housing back into Chicago," said Mayor Richard Daley, who added that he hopes another home show will be held in the city in 1993.

Valerie Jarrett, city planning commissioner, called the Parade an incredible boost to the

home with her 17-year-old daughter, Ramona.

Perkins, a communications specialist with the Chicago Transit Authority, said her new home is only a 10-minute drive from the Merchandise Mart, where she works. A 2½-car garage is being built on the alley in back of the residence.

A key role in the Parade was played by the Illinois Institute of Technology. The IIT campus is just west of the nine show homes, five of them built on Indiana Avenue and four on Prairie Avenue.

Leroy Kennedy, IIT's assistant vice president for community relations, said IIT sold the nine lots to the builders for \$15,000 each, provided parking and additional security for the event.

"Although the attendance was not as high as hoped for, the Parade was a success," Kennedy said. "Word is spreading that the community is on the move and that the residents are involved."

He said IIT plans to sell at least nine more lots to builders. Kennedy added that the event spurred the interest of IIT's architectural department, which may become more involved in



Tribune photo by Hung T. Vu
"I found my dream home and I bought it," says Mattie Perkins, showing off the Phoenix.



housing back into Chicago," said Mayor Richard Daley, who added that he hopes another home show will be held in the city in 1993.

Valerie Jarrett, city planning commissioner, called the Parade an incredible boost to the area. "It will be an anchor for future development," she predicted. Jarrett added that financing problems should be eased when lenders see the success of the new homes.

The Parade generated sparks even in the current period of sluggish residential sales. Priced from \$110,000 to \$195,000, all the show homes have been sold except one, and that house had an early buyer but the deal fell through. What's more, the builders report a number of sales leads and orders for homes as a result of the Parade.

Another beneficiary is the Gap. Bounded by 31st Street, 35th Street, King Drive and Michigan Avenue, the once-deteriorated neighborhood clearly is on a comeback trail.

"There was something happening here before, but the Parade has speeded things up. It seems like everybody's started rehabbing," said Perkins, who recently moved into her dream

home. He said IIT plans to sell at least nine more lots to builders. Kennedy added that the event spurred the interest of IIT's architectural department, which may become more involved in urban home design.

Seven of the nine Parade homes have traditional exterior designs. The Phoenix, though, sports a contemporary look that features a masonry front with an expanse of glass that allows an abundance of daylight into the two-story foyer, which is topped by skylights. Another special feature is the spiral staircase, winding between floors next to a two-story-high glass-block window.

"All that light will make my plants very happy," Perkins said.

Built by Whitman Architecture & Construction Inc., the 2,500-square-foot, three-story Phoenix shows how a home built on a narrow (25-foot-wide) city lot can be as light and airy as a sprawling suburban residence.

"This home reflects the time it was built in;

See Parade, pg. 2



Tribune photo by Ovie Carter

Bruce Fogelson, president of Paramount Homes, says he started benefiting from the Parade even before the home show began.

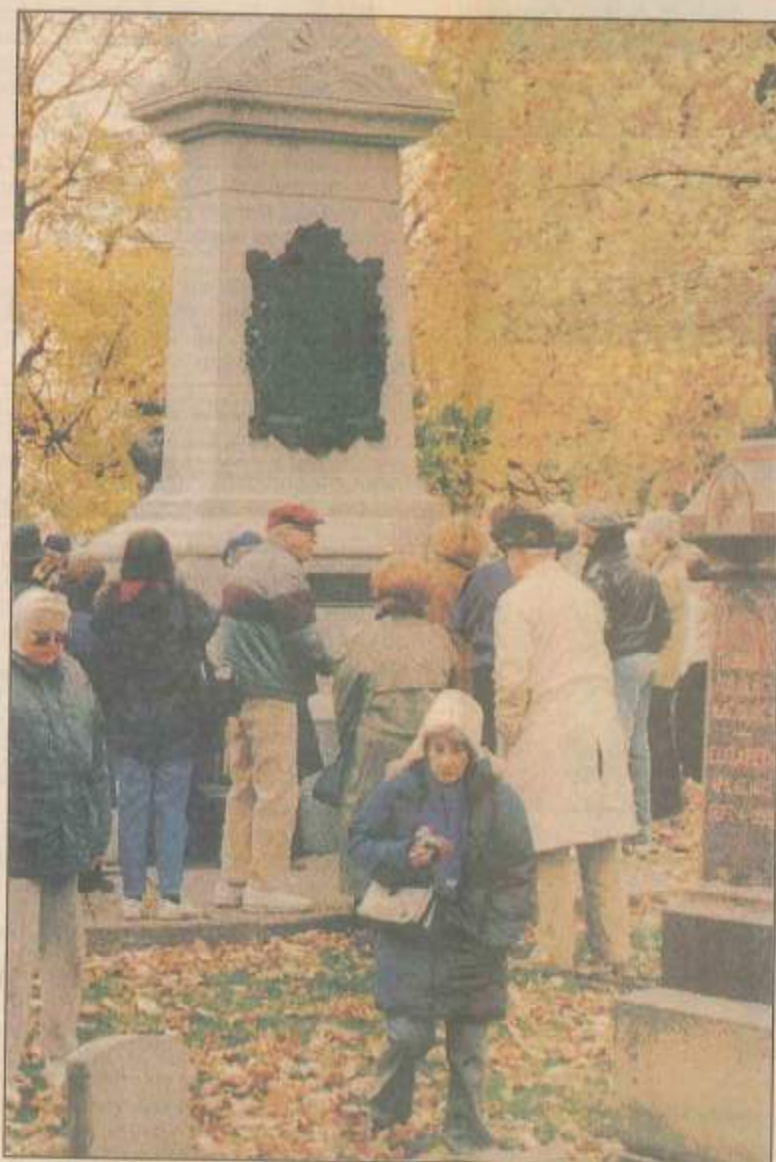


Photo for The Tribune by Matt Marton

Mayor Lorraine Popelka, a widow, puts in full-time hours on a part-time salary because she enjoys the activity.



Chicago Tribune



Tribune photo by Ed Wagner

The grave of four Haymarket Square rioters draws a crowd in Forest Park, where cemeteries have always been a big attraction.

It's keeping alive small-town feeling

By Jon Van

Local boosters prefer to think of Forest Park as "the village with a smile," but they won't deny it if you call their community "the town more dead than alive."

The village nestled next to the Des Plaines River some 11 miles directly west of Chicago's Loop doesn't have an official slogan, but many years ago Forest Park's government had big yellow smiley faces painted on the town's two white water towers to promote a friendly image.

A local gas station operator put up the first sign that said "Village with a smile."

"Ripley's Believe It or Not," the syndicated news feature, is credited with hanging "more dead than alive" on the town in recognition of the fact that Forest Park's living residents are enormously outnumbered by the legions of dead buried here.

Indeed, though some contend that Forest Park's census of about 15,000 is an undercount, it doesn't come close to estimates that from 300,000 to a million people are buried in the town's many cemeteries.

Certainly, Forest Park's most famous residents are among the departed.

They include Michael Todd, well-known movie producer and

At home in

Forest Park

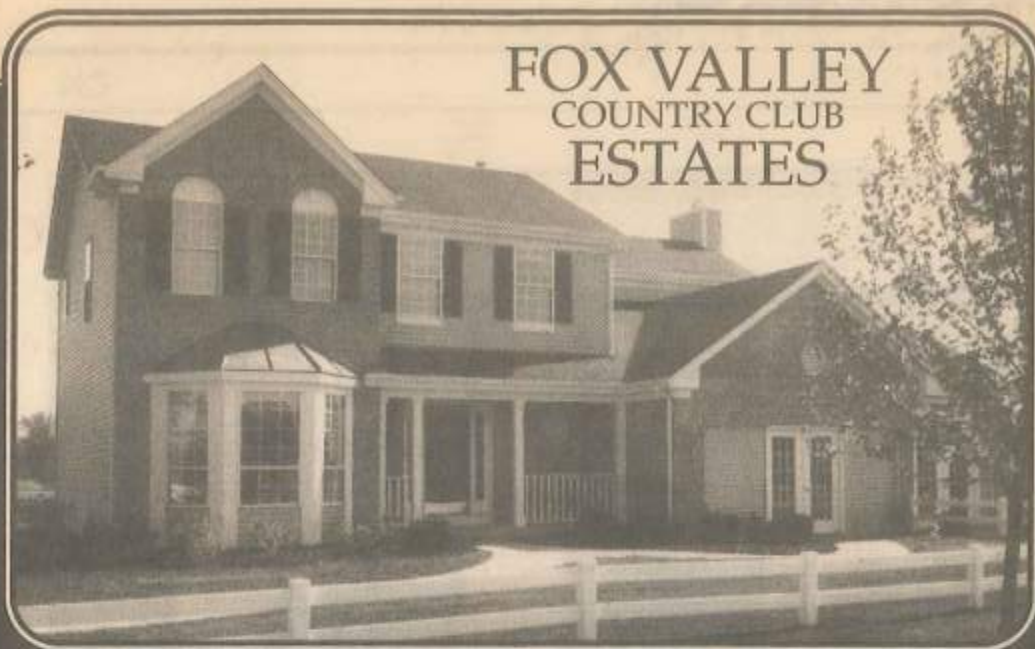
one-time husband of Elizabeth Taylor; Billy Sunday, the baseball player turned radio evangelist who might be chagrined to know most remember him best from lyrics in the song "Chicago"; and Emma Goldman, champion of women's rights and numerous left-wing causes that won her the nickname "Red Emma."

The community's involvement with cemeteries dates to Ferdinand Haase, founder of Harlem — in 1907 it changed its name to Forest Park — who in the last century converted his farm near the Des Plaines River into a cemetery. The area had been a burial ground for the Potawatomi.

Though many Chicago cemeteries seemed to be something akin to an exclusive social fraternity or country club, Forest Park's cemeteries apparently welcomed all comers, or, perhaps more accurately, goes.

Records suggest that four men hanged for their supposed role in the 1886 Haymarket Square bombings were buried in Forest Park

See Forest Park, pg. 4



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Models of Success.

Student home builders earn an A

Students of Maryville Academy in northwest suburban Des Plaines have completed a project that makes the usual stack of homework insignificant: They've helped to build a home with the help of trained professionals, the approval of the appropriate unions and the cooperation of The Kennedy Group, an Arlington Heights-based home building firm.

"The home they started last September has been finished, and was sold just like any other house we build," said Steve Zoll, general sales manager for Kennedy. "Al-

though we may build more than a hundred homes a year, to the students this was a massive project, the only house in town. And now that goal has been achieved."

The 1,930-square-foot, three-bedroom St. Regis the students helped build is one of 107 single-family homes at Kylemore Greens, Kennedy's 52-acre community near the school in Des Plaines.

The project involved as many as 12 students, working under the auspices of a Maryville teacher and contractors in the various fields of expertise. The youths — 16, 17

and 18 years old — worked three to four hours a day on most weekdays since September of 1991, when the St. Regis' foundation was poured.

The student involvement program is the latest result of a long-standing commitment by William W. "Bill" Kennedy, founder and CEO of The Kennedy Group, to bring the many aspects of home building to students.

A home for dependent and neglected youth since 1883, Maryville is affiliated with Catholic Charities of Chicago.



Tribune photos by John Handley

The first urban Parade of Homes, held in the Gap area on Chicago's Near South Side, showcased homes by nine builders. The Firecracker (below) is the only one still unsold.

Parade

Continued from page 1

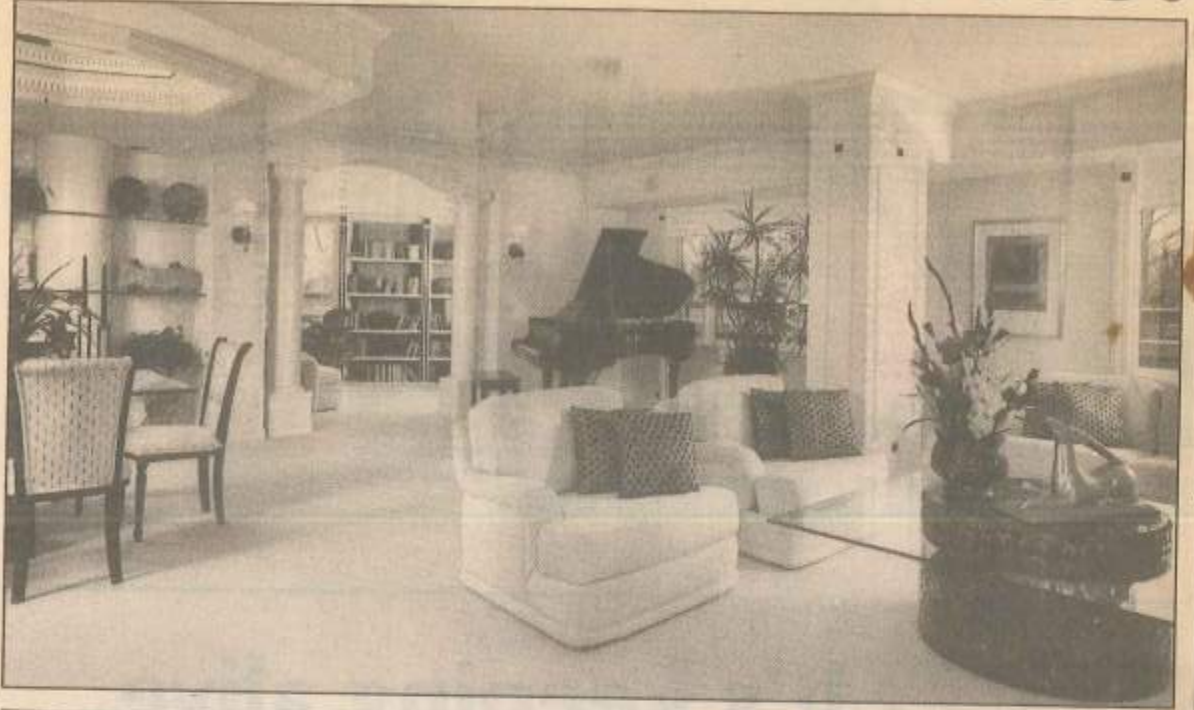
its design was not borrowed from the past," said Daniel Whitman, president of Whitman Architecture & Construction.

"The neighborhood was receptive to the Parade because it was felt that it would have a positive impact on property values," Whitman said, noting that lots that were \$12,000 to \$15,000 before the Parade now are priced from \$20,000 to \$25,000.

"The Gap always needed a catalyst for redevelopment, and the Parade might be it. People have more motivation for rehabbing



Models of Success.



talyst for redevelopment, and the Parade might be it. People have more motivation for rehabbing when they see new construction," Whitman said. "This is a viable area for new homes."

Leonard McGee, president of the Gap Community Organization, is even more enthusiastic. "This is going to be the hottest neighborhood for development in the city," he predicted.

McGee foresees ground being broken for 25 to 40 houses by June.

"The Parade helped in the rebirth of the Gap and allowed the community to showcase a revitalization that has been going on for the last 10 to 14 years," he said.

"The Parade was a far greater success than the builders expected. Many of them didn't think they could make money here. Now one of the biggest challenges is to keep landowners from gouging. In one case, the owner of \$7,500 lot wanted \$35,000 for it after the Parade. We favor fair-market pricing in order to keep the growth going."

McGee said there are many winners from the Parade: the city, the community, the builders and the banks. "The banks have now sent a clear indication that they are willing to lend for the construction of new homes and rehabbing here," he said.

McGee's assessment is backed by Daniel McLean, chairman of the city division of the Home Builders Association of Greater Chicago.

"The purpose of the Parade was to show that there's a market for new housing in older neighborhoods of the city, and we proved it in the Gap," McLean said.

"Also, as a result of the Parade, plans already are under way for 15 to 20 new homes that will be built in the Gap, and it has spurred other builders to come into the area for home construction and remodeling," he said.

McLean said the Gap was selected for the Parade because of its convenient location, good transportation, available lots suitable for in-fill homes, nearby institutional anchors (IIT, Humana-Michael Reese and Mercy Hospitals) and proximity to apartment dwellers who may be considering homeownership.

And what lessons were learned from the first city Parade?

"We should have bought more lots in advance in order to satisfy the demand created by the Parade. We also learned political lessons in regard to laying the groundwork for the event. We had to sell the concept to IIT, the alderman [Bobby Rush] and the Gap Community Organization. It will be easier next time," McLean said.

McLean said the home builders association is searching for a site



for a 1993 Parade of Homes in Chicago.

One of the homes in this year's Parade — the 2,500-square-foot, four-bedroom Hyde Park — was built by McLean's MCL Construction Corp. and Family Homes Inc. Sold for \$195,000, the model won the People's Choice award for best decorating.

Bruce Fogelson, president of Paramount Homes, said the spinoff from the Parade began for him during the construction of his model, the \$154,000 Pinnacle.

"I sold a duplicate of the Parade home, which will be built at my Bell Avenue development in Wickler Park," he said.

"The Parade showed that a lot of house can be built for under \$200,000 at in-fill sites in the city. Many people didn't know that new construction is an alternative to 70-year-old houses in need of a lot of repairs," Fogelson said.

Jeff Welsh, the on-site manager for the Bigelow Co.'s home at the Parade, said the event showed there is a pentup demand for new housing.

Bigelow's model was named the "\$200 Home"—not for its price but because the company guarantees that the home is so energy efficient that heating bills will not exceed \$200 a year.

The 1,200-square-foot design sold for \$110,000, the lowest-priced home at the Parade.

"We may have lost money on it, but we gained a lot of good will and new prospects," Welsh said.

Bigelow works with church organizations in building new residential projects in the city. "We go to areas that need housing, and where other builders normally wouldn't go," said Welsh.

Bigelow is just getting under way with a block-long, seven-duplex development at 200 N. Hamlin Ave. in the city's Garfield Park neighborhood. The floor plans of the duplexes are similar to those in Bigelow's Parade home.

Bill Wolk, a partner in Thrust Development, builder of the

\$129,900 Firecracker model, said it was designed for first-time buyers or empty-nesters. It is the only Parade home still for sale.

"We had a contract on it during the Parade, but the deal fell through. Later, we had another contract that also didn't work out," Wolk said.

He described those who toured the Parade homes as "60 to 70 percent black, mostly young professional couples, both working, very sophisticated potential buyers who were currently living in rental units in the South Loop or Hyde Park. They were surprised and excited that new homes were being built in the area."

Wolk said all the builders took a risk coming into the Gap, which includes some boarded-up, vacant structures. "But the neighborhood has really taken off," he said.

He added that the builders learned a lot at this first city home show. "We should have had a larger site, maybe a square block. The key is to have a self-contained site, so we could create a new little neighborhood."

James Hemphill, president of Home by Hemphill, said builders want to hold another Parade in the city next June. "We've already looked at a wide variety of sites. The first Parade is a prototype, a format we can use in a lot of city neighborhoods," Hemphill said.

Hemphill's 1,500-square-foot Prairie House went for \$139,900.

Jack Hennessy, project manager for the Vintage House, the \$169,900 Parade home by East Lake Management and Burling Builders, said: "We're in the midst of purchasing six more lots in the Gap, and we have contracts for 15 homes varying in price from \$140,000 to \$200,000 — all from the Parade."

The other Parade homes were Chicago House XVI by Creative Construction, a contemporary design priced at \$154,000; and the Pullman by Reichert Builders, a traditional design priced at \$165,000.

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