

# Neighborhood News

The Quarterly Newsletter of The Old Third Ward Neighborhood Association, Inc.  
Spring 1995

## Downtown Plan Forces Compromise

From the outset of the county's parking and expansion plans, the Old Third Ward Neighborhood Association has maintained that the City of Appleton should care about the future of one of its oldest neighborhoods. The impact of the neighborhood's demise and the impact of a sprawling county complex needs to be considered and if these impacts are found to be negative, then something needs to be said. That opinion was finally expressed April 5th, when the Common Council voted unanimously to accept the final draft of the Downtown Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. While it is a plan not entirely positive for the neighborhood, it is a pledge of support.

OTW intently followed the progress of the Downtown Plan from a promising statement of preservation to a rubber stamping of County planning. The final curve ball was the County's need for a new Juvenile Facility to replace the home on the northwest corner of Walnut and Fifth Streets. This further increased the County's need for space, and complicated the issue.

The Downtown Plan was near a final stage of approval when OTW asked to remove the Old Third Ward for further study. We had been made an exception to the preservation principles of the plan and had much to lose from its passage. The Appleton Planning Commission agreed and pulled us out. We had bought more time, we thought, but that's when an already complicated process really began to get sticky. There were other OTW supporters on

the Common Council who had a different concern: If the Old Third Ward were left out of the plan, the issues needing solving may never be addressed. It was this concern which threw into motion an attempt by City Planner Warren Utecht and Alderman Michael Whitman to work out a compromise which would be accepted by the Common Council and be plausible for Outagamie County and the neighborhood. During a special 2 1/2 hour session with Utecht and Whitman, OTW pushed for neighborhood preservation including existing houses and Casa Clare, but not all these wishes would survive the political process.

The final plan breaks down into the following points:

### Pros (for the neighborhood)

1. Draws residential boundaries south of Eight Street, west of Walnut Street, south of Sixth street (with one exception) and leaves existing homes on the north edge of Sixth St. and Prospect Ave.
2. Provides additional county parking near the police station.
3. Urges the County to control access to free parking to keep out intruders and increase capacity.
4. Asks the County to consider a parking structure after the year 2005.
5. Recommends the County use the northwest corner of Walnut and Lawrence Streets for parking and building a new Juvenile Facility to avoid disrupting more of Fifth Street.

### Cons

1. Recommends eventual acquisition of two homes on Seventh Court and Casa

Clare to convert land to surface parking

This plan comes very close to the neighborhood preservation OTW has set out to achieve, yet at the same time, we have not endorsed it because neighbors and members of OTW are still affected. We have stated all along that as an organization, we cannot give permission for any one of our neighbor's homes to be taken, and we will not.

However, given the political realities as they currently are, we view the terms of this plan as the best effort that could be achieved at this time. It must also be pointed out that Outagamie County has not been a part of this planning process and any final policy still depends on what the County adopts.

## Creation of Three-way Dialogue Sought

Addressing concerns that a continuous dialogue be maintained to develop solutions to County expansion and neighborhood concerns, Alderman Michael Whitman and Supervisor Dean Culbertson have initiated steps to bring a subcommittee together. Under the proposed resolutions, members from the County Property Committee, City Plan Commission, City and County Planning Departments, County Human Services and the Old Third Ward would finally sit down at the same table to discuss their differences. We have been waiting for such a dialogue for a long time. It was first proposed by Ron Van De Hey in December, 1993.



## County Acquires House

Old Third Ward has recently learned that Outagamie County has finalized plans to purchase the Leo VandenBrandt home on Seventh Court. The OTW Board had sought to dissuade VandenBrandt and his son John from selling this rental property to the County at a special meeting on February 21st

It was hoped that before the county purchased more land, it would pursue simpler measures to increase available parking such as restricting the use of free parking to employees only, using more on-street parking, or leasing existing empty space.

Regardless of the passage of the Downtown Comprehensive Plan which endorsed this purchase, it is truly a sad day when we must lose another part of our neighborhood because of modern day man's laziness to walk a few blocks. The homes in the Old Third Ward were built here because they were within walking distance of the stores and businesses of their owners. How ironic that that distance today is deemed too far to walk and therefore these same precious homes are now endangered.

We are thankful to those County Supervisors who voted against the budget appropriation to buy this house. They maintained their convictions in spite of the fact that the neighborhood was uninformed about this vote and had no opportunity to protest.

## Old Third Ward Still On Endangered List

A survey received from the Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation has indicated the Old Third Ward Neighborhood will remain on its 1994 10 Most Endangered Historic Properties List until removal of the threat of County encroachment can be proved.

Each year the Trust identifies 10 historic properties from around the state which are threatened, but creation of a new list does not remove attention from

properties added in previous years.

Until policy can be developed at the County level which will demonstrate parking and expansion plans that will not harm the historical neighborhood bordering it, the Old Third Ward will remain as an endangered area.

## Quote/Unquote

*"Will the county board let this session pass without an effort...to obtain a location for a courthouse and county offices in proximity to the business center, Post Office and North - Western Railway Depot? The courthouse is rotting down and not one in fifty desires to see a new one located where only private residences should be found."*

- The Appleton Crescent  
November 15, 1879

## Historical Houses

### *In The Old Third Ward*

*(Beginning with this issue of "Neighborhood News", we will be featuring histories of the houses that we live in.)*

### **300 West Prospect Ave.** (Condensed from research by Carol LeRoy)

Presently a three family dwelling, 300 West Prospect was purchased by Carol LeRoy and her husband, Gordon Schmiedl, after having relocated here from Milwaukee. They were looking for a large home to live in and restore while earning rental income. The house was ideal.

When Carol and Gordon purchased the home, the upper flat was occupied by Miss Ruth Parkinson, a resident for 17 years. Ms. Parkinson was employed as an English teacher at McKinley and

then as a librarian at Appleton West High School.

From 1974 until 1980, Henry and Muriel Johnston were tenants in the large downstairs apartment. Henry is a descendent of an early Appleton settler for whom Johnston Street and School are named. Melvin (Bud) and Verna Buesing were the tenants from 1980 until 1992.

The history of the home becomes more sketchy as we go back in time. It was owned for about a year by Malva and Bill Dutcher. Previous to the Dutchers, it was owned by two generations of the Kloehn family. Dr. Otto Kloehn and his wife, Myrtie, bought the home in the 1920's as an investment. Kloehn, originally a dentist from Milwaukee, would take trips up to Appleton with his "new cars". Soon he was purchasing cars and bringing them up for friends. Later he would give up his dental practice to start an auto dealership in Appleton.

When Otto and Myrtie's son Kenneth (also a dentist) married Betty Jane in July of 1938, they moved into the lower east apartment. The house was much smaller then. This apartment was just three rooms. In 1941 their first son was born, so they added an additional bedroom to the northwest side. Children kept coming and so did additions. After the family returned from Arkansas where Ken served in the Army Dental Corps, the home was completely remodeled. The southeast room, a dining room, and a wet bar with inside gas grill was added.

The Kloehn's tenants, Ruth Mielke and Lynda Hollenbeck were very much a part of the family. Miss Mielke, well remembered as a librarian at Appleton High School (now "West"), occupied the small apartment until her retirement in 1955. She used a fold-down Murphy Bed that was located under the stairway. Lynda Hollenbeck lived upstairs. She was treasurer or assistant treasurer at Wisconsin - Michigan Power Co. and an endless community volunteer. Her work for Appleton Memorial Hospital included bookkeeping for the gift shop, assisting the administrator and making the famous homemade caramels that were featured at the annual hospital bazaar.

Candy making time started in November. The Prospect house became a wonderfully smelling candy factory engaging every member of the Prospect "family" plus loads of Lynda's friends. The Kloehn's three little boys were carriers, messengers, and phone answerers as they grew older. Ken E. became the expert chocolate dipper. He also knew the precise moment when the English toffee had to be taken off the stove.

Betty Jane or B. J. would be excused

## Thank You to Our New Members

(Since 2-1-95)

Rhonda and Scott Philiben  
Gayle Hardt  
Mike and Patricia Monroe

## Old Third Ward Board of Directors\*

Frank Council (Pres)	733-5766
Linda Muldoon (VP)	739-5762
Jackie Dungar (Treas)	739-4656
Meg Casey (Sec)	734-8814
Sally Johnson	733-0879
Bruce Ladewig	739-0644
Ann Sager	733-2370
Bill Anderson	734-7484
Dan Hulbert	731-9123

## Steering Committee Advisors

Joyce Anderson	734-7484
Margo Chadwick	954-9110
Mary Beth Laux	734-6513
Carol LeRoy	954-0754
Sue Martinson	830-1121

\*Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month. OTW members welcome anytime. Call one of the above for meeting times and place.

*"Neighborhood News" was compiled and written by Frank Council and Linda Muldoon.*

from candy projects to go downstairs and prepare a meal for all the workers, who at her call, would take a welcome break from the chilled upstairs kitchen (needed for candy making) to enter the Kloehn's warm apartment and enjoy a simple repast and lots of good conversation - then back to work.

The caramels were the largest project. First the recipe had to be prepared in huge stew kettles. One kettle, or batch, made seven pounds of caramels. Then the kettles of steaming, bubbling caramel were brought to the correct temperature and poured into large shallow trays to cool and harden. The trays were placed on the attic stairs, a perfect cool place. The next day or two would be caramel cutting time on the special caramel cutter and then each caramel was wrapped in a pre-cut oblong of wax paper and packed just so, with the fold down, in specially made boxes, each box holding one pound of candy.

The bulk of the candy went to the bazaar, but every worker took candy home in generous amounts, and Lynda saw to it that the Prospect family had all the candy they could use. Years later when Lynda retired, she taught a candy crew from the hospital auxiliary the caramel process and gave all her equipment to Sally Mielke (Dr. John's wife), who was president of the auxiliary, so that the tradition of the caramels could be carried on.

\*\*\*

In 1994, the present owners contacted Betty Kloehn to help and clarify research into the history of the house. The following account was sent back:

About 30 years ago B. J. Kloehn had a visitor to the home on Prospect, escorted by John Rosebush from Lawrence University. This lady whom B. J. remembers as a Miss Brown, was on a nostalgic trip to Appleton to track her roots. At 80 years old she was a charming articulate woman who seemed much younger. She was pleased with the good condition of the house in spite of its age, which she said was 100 years. She described in detail how the house looked in her youth:

It had a "widow's walk" on the roof,

# RUMMAGE THE OLD THIRD WARD

**NEIGHBORS IN THE OLD THIRD WARD WILL BE HOLDING RUMMAGE SALES ON THE SAME DAY TO BENEFIT OTW'S POLITICAL EFFORT, NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT AND HISTORICAL NOMINATIONS.**

**WHEN:**

**MAY 20TH**

**WHERE:**

**WITHIN OTW'S BOUNDARIES OF MEMORIAL DRIVE, PROSPECT AVENUE, ONEIDA STREET AND LAWRENCE STREET.**

**TO PARTICIPATE:**

**CALL BILL ANDERSON AT 734-7484 OR SUE MARTINSON AT 830-1121 TO GET RUMMAGE SIGNS AND BALLOONS FOR YOUR SALE; OR, YOU MAY DONATE ITEMS TO BE SOLD. PLEASE TELL US WHAT PERCENT OF THE RECEIPTS YOU WISH TO DONATE.**

*(Continued from previous page)*

patterned after eastern homes, which looked out to sea. Inside, one entered the front door into a very large foyer with a wide, open staircase to the second floor.

Beveled leaded glass in the door and wide window brought wonderful prisms of multicolored light to the hallway. There were front and back parlors connected by double French doors. There was a formal dining room on the west side, with a large butler's pantry leading to the kitchen and back door. Below the kitchen there was a mud-floored root cellar, but no basement. (At a later time, perhaps the early twentieth century, the house was raised and a basement installed under the entire house. One imagines that central heating may have been added at this time. The roof line was also changed, abolishing the widow's walk.)

B. J. and her visitor talked for hours and explored the whole house. Miss Brown

promised a framed picture of the house as she described it, which now hung in her home in California. They parted friends, but unfortunately Betty Kloehn never heard from her again. She heard about her, however, through friends whose parents lived in the same retirement home and thought highly of this woman and her new husband. So B. J. did not pursue the subject of the picture, feeling if Miss Brown wanted her to have it, it would happen. It did not.

### 300 West Prospect Early Chronology

1874 - Appleton City Directory - Brown, T. W., pump manufacturer, res. north side of Prospect, 5 west of bridge.

1877 - Mrs. Ophelia Forward becomes a "preceptress" (female teacher) at Lawrence University. Her husband, R. A. Forward died November 17, 1861.

1880 - July 6, Ophelia marries Thomas W. Brown. She is a trustee of Lawrence from 1880-1891.

1891 - Abstract - December 26, Thomas W. Brown and Ophelia to John A. Whorton for \$3,100.

1906 - Jennie Whorton, Zariah Morton, Ione Simpson, Georgine Jackson.

1920 - William and Eliza Powell, and daughter June Powell Grey (John Frank Grey). William Powell was a banker and visited 300 West Prospect years later. It is thought the Powells did the initial extensive remodeling to the house.

*(Neighborhood News wishes to thank Carol and Gordy for sharing this extensive research on their home. If you would like to share the history of your home with our readers, please call 733-5766.)*

\*\*\*

*Old Third Ward, Inc.*

523 South State Street  
Appleton, Wisconsin 54911