



2025 ANNUAL

Weekend Tour of Homes

SATURDAY, MAY 17: 11AM- 5PM

SUNDAY, MAY 18: 1PM- 6PM

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ANNUAL Weekend Tour of Homes

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Acknowledgments and Special Thanks

We wish to thank the Heritage Hill hosts who graciously open their doors and the volunteer tour guides who orchestrate our tour. Home Tour hosts and room guides volunteer their homes and their time.

Volunteer Guide Opportunities

Volunteer guide positions are open. If you wish to volunteer for the 2026 Tour, you will receive a
FREE

Welcome to Our Home! It means a lot to have you visit us here. Heritage Hill is a community that almost wasn't.

Urban renewal efforts, in vogue starting in the 1940s, reached an apex in the mid-to-late 1960s. Around that time, concerns grew about the broad out-with-the-old-and-in-with-the-new practice. If you're from Grand Rapids, you know how the extended and contentious effort to save our 1888 Gothic Victorian Old City Hall culminated in its razing in 1969. (One of the homes on this tour has a stunning couch from Old City Hall, by the way. You'll see that at 582 Lafayette SE.)

The residents in what is now Heritage Hill didn't want the same thing to happen here. The majority of the historic homes and buildings in the neighborhood where you now stand were threatened with destruction. It took neighbors forming the Heritage Hill Association in 1968 and working tirelessly – in meetings and protests and through the courts – to have “The Hill” receive protection under federal, state, and local law. Not all homes were saved before those protections were put in place, but those remaining now form one of the largest urban historic districts protected under the National Historic Preservation Act. Within the boundaries of Heritage Hill are more than 1,300 historically preserved homes, the earliest dating from 1843. We are Michigan's largest and finest concentration of 19th and early 20th-century homes, representing nearly every style of American architecture, from Greek Revival to Prairie

We are rated as one of the best historic neighborhoods in the United States by This Old House magazine.

What is remarkable is what the preservation of our historic homes has built. Coming out of an era of urban sprawl that saw people leave city centers for city outskirts and suburbs, which devalued community and exacerbated energy consumption and public health challenges, the preservation of our historic homes and buildings has brought people back to the city core. Today, The Hill is proudly one of Grand Rapids' densest neighborhoods, with approximately 4,300 residents within our nearly 1.5 square miles. Many of us live in homes we own, but many more neighbors are renters. Bordering downtown, we provide a cultural hub that interconnects economic, social, and residential areas.

We love our homes, and you will too, not because they are old or big, but because they were made by craftspeople who were careful and caring in their work. The natural materials and attention to detail give visitors the sense of the homes as living places where those who constructed them and those who have lived in them still remain in spirit. The first Home Tour was held in 1969 to raise money to





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243 Morris Ave

Hosts: Tom & Carol Postma

This Craftsman Style home was built in 1908 for Addison and Emma Barber. Mr. Barber owned the Grand Rapids Bookcase and Chair Company, which specialized in Arts and Crafts (Mission) style furniture. Very few changes have been made to the original structure and character of the home since it was built. The Postma's have lived here for fifty years and are only the fourth owners. Their commitment to preserving and honoring the **Arts and Crafts style** of the home is evident in every detail.

The Craftsman exterior features clean geometric lines, inset half-timbers, a spacious porch with integrated planters, and striking leaded windows, reflecting the Arts and Crafts aesthetic.

A mix of mahogany, oak, pine, cherry, birch, and gum wood defines the interior, which also features original or antique lights and small, square leaded-glass windows.

The Postma's have furnished the home with hand-made wool rugs, period wallpaper, reproduction fabrics, and oak Mission furniture, including "Lifetime" pieces from the original owner's company. A prized feature is the Barbers' original grandfather clock, which was returned to its place by their granddaughter.

Lovely details abound, including exquisite screened wallpaper, a hand-crafted copper fireplace hood with a mirrored mantle, and a light-filled dining room with a sunny breakfast nook. The kitchen hints at Tom's Dutch heritage, and an original small room by the stairs still houses the home's first phone.

Continuing the Arts and Crafts theme upstairs, discover a unique floor plan with three bedrooms, two baths, a sunroom, and a maid's room off separate hallways. Note the original cabinet in the primary bath, where even updates respect the 1908 style. We are delighted to welcome you on a journey



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326 Madison Ave

The Houseman

This elegant **Georgian Revival style** home was built for a prominent member of the Grand Rapids business community, Henry L. Houseman, and his wife, Bertha Jesselman Houseman. Henry's father, Joseph, had opened a clothing store in the downtown area in 1852, back when inventory included clothing for lumberjacks and Indian blankets. The company passed to Henry at age 22 when his father died in 1908, the same year that this house was built. After Henry's passing, Bertha sold the home a few years before her own death in 1947.

Characterized by a formal, symmetrical brick facade with white trim, this Georgian Revival boasts a central entry porch with Corinthian columns, flanked by Palladian windows. A five-chimney roof is adorned with twin dormers, and sun porches extend from both sides.

Purchased in 1993 after serving as a sorority, brothel, and apartments, this neglected home underwent significant exterior repairs in 1994, including the capitals, brickwork, and a new roof. Architect Robert Winters designed the pagoda and rear brick walls, and an original main bedroom balcony was discovered and restored.

Since the current owners bought it, the interior has been dramatically transformed from four apartments (created in the 1940s). They removed a central wall and cut through the first-floor ceiling to create a two-story entry, sweeping stairway, and balcony. Omate wood trim was added throughout, with the owners undertaking most of the 2001-2003 renovation themselves, with help from friends and family; professionals handled electrical,



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573 Prospect Ave

Host: Suzanne De

Built in 1907 for contractor Charles Gant, this lovely **Georgian Revival** showcases the style's signature symmetry in its window placement, central entrance, and full-length porch with ornate, hand-carved columns, topped by a gambrel roof.

Once a single-family home, later two apartments, this property faced major fire damage in the early 80s. The Stout family embarked on a significant restoration to return it to a single-family residence in 1985, adding key modern conveniences and a new kitchen. The De Haans, who took ownership in 1999, continued its evolution with a cherry study and kitchen modifications.

Even with a complicated history and a few necessary modern updates, the basic structure, floor plan, and character of the home have changed very little over 118 years. It is so well-designed that changes were not often necessary.

A unique and special feature of the home is the fireplace in the foyer, inviting guests to sit and warm themselves on the built-in benches on either side. Nestled in an arched alcove, the firelight reflects off the gold leaf applied to the ceiling. A cozy parlor is to the right, and a large living room to the left leads to the dining room that has an original chandelier and a wide bay window, perfect for bird watching. The kitchen has mahogany cupboards with glass doors where Suzanne displays many of her heirloom dishes.

Featuring leaded windows on the landing, the stairway ascends to three second-floor bedrooms, a study with a porch, and a bath with original tile and fixtures. Upstairs, family history comes alive through furniture, photographs, a flour-sack quilt,

Thanks to the many, many volunteers without whom Home Tour would not be possible. We particularly appreciate these community leaders:

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Suzanne De Haan
Kate Diedrich
Laska Nygaard
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Don Rietema
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Laska Nygaard
Maria Zache Starkey
Carly Durham-Bruins



122 College Ave

The Steketee

This outstanding example of the **Queen Anne Style** was built in the 1890's for Daniel and Gertrude Steketee. Daniel was the son of Paul Steketee, a pioneering Grand Rapids businessman who founded the upscale department store that bore the family name.

Typical of its style, this home's entirely wooden exterior features varied textures and a multi-planed facade, creating an informal look. Bay windows, gables, porches, and a prominent three-story turret are present. An extension, likely added when the house was divided into three apartments, now complements the current owner's restoration into a museum-quality family home with an attic apartment.

The spacious wood foyer features a Minton-tiled fireplace, a bay window, an elegant carved stairway with a graceful newel post light, setting the tone for the home's high style and craftsmanship throughout.

The owner's meticulous restoration of this home, unusual for its 1890's open floor plan and high ceilings, showcases custom carpets, block-printed wallpaper, and gas/electric lighting. A significant draw is the extensive collection of antique furniture and early mechanical devices, including a player piano and even a display of Thomas Edison's first light bulbs (given by his son).

Entering the kitchen is like stepping into the Victorian Era, with an 1890's gas stove that the cook had to put her arm into to gauge the temperature, a 1927 model of General Electric's first refrigerator, linoleum made from the original turn-of-the-century formula, and a servants' call box attached to several buttons throughout the house.

We are extremely grateful to Corewell Health for providing shuttle buses and drivers; Grand Rapids

Community College for providing parking and the shuttle bus hub; Don Dekker and the Meyer May House;

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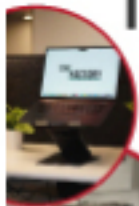
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536 Prospect Ave

Hosts: Kate & Dan

Built in 1907 on land once owned by Harriet Stowe and sold to her daughter Ella and son-in-law Scott Thompson (partner in Stowe Davis Furniture Co.), this simple yet sturdy **American Foursquare** has remained a single-family home with only five owners in over twelve decades. Kate and Dan purchased it in 1979.

The home's exterior combines a stucco first story and wood shingles on the second. A Palladian window, a salvaged match to the original, graces the central gable. The original front porch was enclosed as a sunroom (front door moved), now a viewing and mosaic display space. The back porch was enclosed to create a breakfast area with an upper sun porch.

The exterior required extensive repair upon purchase, and restoration has been ongoing, with the owners doing much of the work. Unique touches, like painted ginkgo leaves on windows, porch, and front door tiles, add character. The dining room features leaded windows and decorative wall treatments.

The window-rich main floor was opened in 1914 with French doors, highlighting the oak woodwork. An antique mantle and yard sale columns accent the living room. The kitchen offers maple cupboards and counters, and a half-bath was included.

A stained-glass tulip window graces the landing on the way to the second floor, where a guest bedroom, a family room, a bath with hand-thrown sinks, a study, a linen closet, the primary bedroom, and the attic entrance all branch off from a 14' by 6' hallway. The attic has been made into a colorful playroom and an art studio.





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582 Lafayette Ave

Hosts: Carly Durham-Bruins & Casey

Built around 1880, this is the oldest house on tour this year. Early records are not clear about the original owner. The house has passed through many hands over the years, sometimes owner-occupied and sometimes as a rental property. That kind of history can take its toll on a home, and this property was in need of TLC when Carly and

Casey first walked through it. Recognizing the great potential this home possessed, they purchased it barely a year ago and ever since have been enthusiastically working to repair, refinish, remodel, and furnish a neglected house, transforming it into a lovely, livable home for their family.

The ornate detailing on the exterior of this **Classic Revival** style home is extraordinary – Ionic columns supporting the porch, delicately carved details on the eave supports and window trim, a dentil pattern decorating the edges, and an inset scallop shell on the central peak. A southern bay window beautifies the dining room, and another on the north illuminates the grand stair landing. Matching rounded dormers extend out from either side of the roof.

Inside the grand exterior, a Foursquare layout offers a spacious foyer. This flows into a sunlit living room and a dining room with a large bay window and a crystal chandelier above an antique table (by a former buffet alcove). The rear addition includes the parquet-floored kitchen, a breakfast/office space, and a bath.

The foyer's open wood stairway has a scallop shell newel post carving, mirroring the exterior and symbolizing rebirth. Upstairs offers four bedrooms



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The

Built around 1880 by bachelor lumber barons Ethelbert Crofton Fox and Charles Fox, "The Castle" stands as a prominent **Chateau Style** landmark in Heritage Hill, inspired by a Scottish castle Charles admired during European travels for his health. Charles commissioned architect William G. Robinson to design it, utilizing rustic, two-foot-thick granite stones imported from Scotland. The exterior boasts crenellated turrets, bays, galleries, and gables, accented by various Palladian, leaded, and stained-glass windows. A unique feature is the two-story oriel bay window on the west side, crafted from pressed tin and painted to perfectly match the natural stone.

E. Crofton Fox, after a career that included moving to Grand Rapids after college and becoming a leader in the lumber industry, was also active in philanthropic endeavors. Charles Fox, a U of M graduate, joined his brother in business and had diverse investments. The two brothers, who never married, accumulated significant wealth, and family ownership of The Castle ended with Charles' death in 1915.

Initially a single-family residence, The Castle later transitioned into a boarding house and then sat vacant for six years, falling into disrepair. In 1934, it was purchased by a contractor and ingeniously reconfigured into a professional building, which it has remained, housing various offices over the years, including a dentist's office.

Stonecastle Dentistry, the current occupant, has been very sensitive to the architectural integrity of The Castle. A substantial entry door opens to a parlor featuring original parquet flooring, twelve-foot-high ceilings, and a carved oak stairway



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