

# Building Plaque Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Building Address 53 CRIGHTON AVE

Building Name \_\_\_\_\_

(for public/commercial structures)

If applicant's name is different from above:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Original Owner SARAH A. PARRY

Date of Construction 1928

Architect (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Builder (if known) OTTO-OLSEN-CEMENT-CONTRACTOR-Elgin  
JOE HUBER-MASON-Elgin

Check if attached:

☒ **Statement Of Value**

Please review the criteria on page 5. The Elgin Heritage Commission uses these criteria to review your application and award a plaque. Attach an explanation of the historical **and** architectural value of the building. Attach photocopies of relevant materials such as copies of Sanborn maps, original property deeds and City Directory listings. Applications without these requirements will not be considered by the Elgin Heritage Commission.

☒ **Building Alterations**

Describe any alterations to the **exterior** of the building and include dates. Attach description to the application.

☒ **Photograph**

Include a recent photograph in which the building is clearly visible. Additional photographs depicting a close up and details of decorative features are helpful.

## Stipulations

If the building is not awarded a plaque, the application fee of \$15.00 will be refunded.

This application and submitted materials shall be retained by the City of Elgin as a part of the permanent record of the building.

The Elgin Heritage Commission has the authority to edit and publish the information submitted in the application. This does not prohibit others from using the information.

When awarded, the plaque will remain the property of the City and cannot be altered or removed from the building. It is the City's responsibility to replace the plaque if and when the situation warrants it.

In addition to agreeing to the above stipulations, the undersigned attests that the information provided is, to the best of his/her knowledge, accurate.

Owner's Signature Kenneth E. Parry & Irene H. Parry

Date 1-5-98

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



Sears House Project  
c/o Rebecca Hunter

Here is the application for a historic plaque which you requested. You may apply for the plaque even if your house is not a Sears house, as long as it is at least 50 years old.

In the absence of paper documentation about the origin of your house, the easiest way to determine whether it is from Sears would be to locate some part numbers on the beams or rafters. I hope you will take a few minutes to look for these, and notify me if you find them!

They are most easily seen on the basement ceiling, under the basement stairs, or in attic spaces. Because the numbers have usually faded over the years, you will most likely need a strong flashlight. They are stamped on the wood in dark blue or black ink, near the ends of the boards. They are usually on the wider surface (i.e. on a 2 x 4 look on the 4" sides). Sears part numbers consist of a capital letter followed by one or more numbers, e.g. A159.

If you would like to see a photograph of a part number, let me know, or if you would like assistance in the search, call me.

Thanks for your participation in this research project.

6-6144

E5088

# Examination of Title

To

Lts 5 & 6 of Geo. E. Bowen's Sub,  
Elgin, KCI.

For

Kenneth Parry et al.

**Kane County Title Co.**  
**ABSTRACTS OF TITLE**

THIRD STREET OPPOSITE COURT HOUSE  
GENEVA, ILLINOIS

No. 207572

Loan No.

6-6144

Name

Kenneth Parry



SEARS ALHAMBRA 1928 53 CRIGHTON AVE ELGIN ILL



[illegible]

had turned sour, and even with such accommodating terms, people were forced to hold off on such a major decision. With each passing year of the Depression plunging the "Modern Homes" department deeper in the red, Sears mail-order homes would make their last appearance on the pages of the 1937 catalog. While the company continued some aspect of the lumber operation, including the providing of prefabricated buildings for government housing during World War II, the mail-order house building program was never revived.

SEARS HOUSES IN ELGIN: A HISTORIC SURVEY

53 CRIBBTON-A1  
ALHAMBRA

Please answer the following questions, and return this survey in the enclosed stamped, self addressed envelope.

1. What information do you have about the history of your house?

my Grandparents William & Sarah Pary  
built this Sears Alhambra Home for my  
father & mother Carl & Edythe Pary in 1928-29

2. Do you have any documentation showing that it is (or is not) a  
Sears house?

"Yes" - Blue Print for Honor Bilt Home # 17090-A  
Sears Roebuck & Co 2-23-24 - Chicago Ill.

3. Do you have any old photographs of the house?

YES

4. Have you made any changes to the exterior of the house?

Enclosed the front Porch - 1965

5. Please list other Sears houses in Elgin which you are aware of:

6. Would you like information about obtaining a historic plaque for  
your house? YES

THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH!

If you would like me to contact you by telephone, list phone number  
and best times to call:

If you would like to become involved in this project, tell me how you  
can help. Circle your preferences:

Search for houses

Prepare displays

Prepare mailings

Library research

Other:

FOX VALLEY LANDMARKS / MICK ZAWISLAK

## Ready-to-assemble homes by Sears dot the Midwest

**P**re-fabricated homes often are associated with the suburban growth spurt of the 1950s, but long before subdivisions such as Meadowdale, a familiar name in retailing was producing its own brand of the American dream.

Between 1908 and 1939, Sears, Roebuck and Co., produced and marketed 450 home models ranging from basic box designs to elaborate knock-offs of historical styles, such as Dutch Colonial or English Tudor.

Customers could browse through catalogs, looking for an affordable yet distinct design. Sears was no leader in fashion but the company faithfully followed existing style, adapting the popular ones and making them widely available.

Cost of the homes ranged from \$146.25 for a two-room vacation cottage (no bath) in 1911 to \$5,927 for an eight-room copy in 1921 of George Washington's Cambridge, Mass., residence.

The ready-to-assemble homes would arrive by rail and typically consisted of about 30,000 separate parts (nails not included). Most of the Sears homes appeared in towns along railroads in the Northeast and Midwest.

By the time the run ended, about 100,000 of the Sears kit homes had been purchased nationally. Hundreds of those customers were from Elgin and there was enough interest for Sears to operate a sales office downtown for two years in 1929-30.

Sears' district manager, John W. Garman, lived in the Barrington model at 337 Hamilton Ave., described as having the "dignity of an old English home," with the practical interior of modern American architecture.

Many other Sears homes have been well-documented, such as the neighboring Cornell and Puritan model at 667 and 671 Oak St., on the west side, for example. But there is no definitive list, which is where Rebecca Hunter comes in.

Hunter, a chiropractor and entrepreneur, moved to the northeast side of Elgin from Chicago four years ago. A fascination with history and research led her to the Gail Borden Public Library for information on her own home (which is not a Sears kit), when fate in-

tervened.

"Right next to the book I needed was a little book called *Houses By Mail*. I started flipping through it and said, 'These are darling houses.' That's what started it all."

That book, commissioned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, was a guide to Sears homes. Hunter began digging in and began a project to document all the Sears homes in Elgin.

The Elgin Heritage Commission last week agreed with the idea and agreed to give Hunter \$1,000 for expenses associated with her research, which includes a questionnaire mailed to owners of suspected Sears homes.

So far, she has located and identified more than 150 homes resembling those in the Sears Modern Home catalogs in Elgin and believes there are about 200 in the city overall. Sarosh Saher, the city's preservation specialist, has been consulting Hunter on the project.

Sears has no records concerning the locations of homes that were sold, but judging by style, most of the Sears homes in Elgin were built between 1923 and 1931. Eight examples have

been identified on Hamilton and seven on Oak Street.

Sears' Modern Homes styles include single-family cottages and bungalows, American foursquare, Dutch Colonial, English Tudor, three-story Victorian mansions, farm houses, barns, duplexes and four-flats.

The homes were regarded as sturdy, inexpensive and modern. Home kits would be delivered with manuals for plastering, electrical work, plumbing and heating and some were as long as 75 pages.

Homeowners may live in a Sears home and not know it. Clues can be found in shipping labels, blueprints, old photographs, measurements and dimensions of the house and identifying part numbers on beams or rafters. Look for clues near the ends of beams or the eave end of rafters or under stairs, Hunter suggests.

"The reason I'm doing this is I don't want this information to get lost again," says Hunter, who will be displaying the information she has gathered during the month of July at Gail Borden.



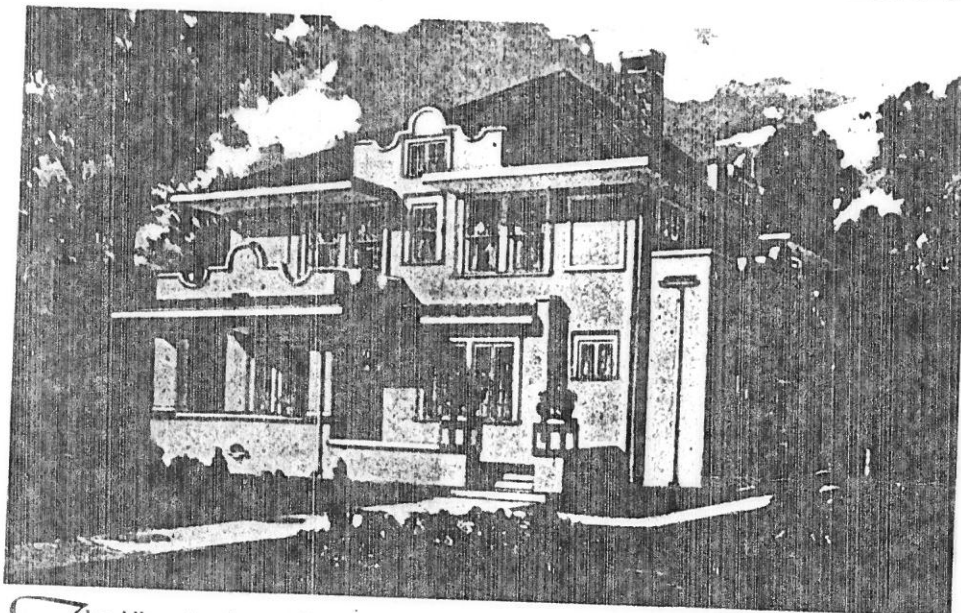
**Sears Kit Homes**

**Date:** Early 1900s.

**Significance:** Rebecca Hunter moved to Elgin for its historic homes about five years ago, and she happened into a love affair with Sears kit homes, a classic piece of Americana.



# THE ALHAMBRA



The Alhambra is an effective Mission style of architecture. Its exterior appearance, as well as the interior arrangement, will appeal to anyone who likes massiveness and plenty of room.

Details and features: Eight rooms and one bath. Stucco exterior; curvilinear gables; overhanging eaves; open porch and terrace in front. Fireplace in living room; built-in sideboard in dining room; built-in seat in sun room.

Years and catalog numbers: 1918 (2090); 1919 (2090); 1921 (7080); 1924 (17090A); 1925 (17090A); 1926 (P17090A); 1928 (C17090A); 1929 (P17090A)

Price: \$1,969 to \$3,134

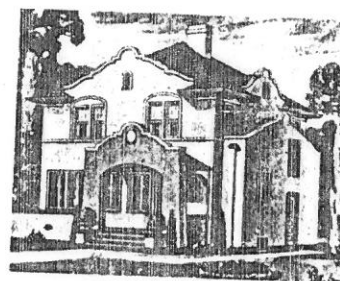
Locations: Norwood Park, Ill.; Dayton, Ohio

Similar to: The Monterey

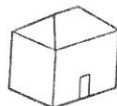
Differences: Different gable and porch designs

Year and catalog number: 1924 (3312)

Price: \$2,998



The Monterey





EXAMINATION OF TITLE  
TO

Lots 5 and 6 of George E. Bowen's Subdivision, in the City of  
Elgin, Kane County, Illinois.

—  
Last examination made by us August 23, 1928.  
—

Sarah A. Parry, widow,  
of Elgin, Kane County,  
Illinois,

1. to

Walker O. Lewis.

)  
Trust Deed dated September  
15, 1928 and recorded  
September 27, 1928 in  
Book        Page  
To secure her note bear-

to wit: \$33.00 on the fifteenth day of each and every month in each year after the date hereof, beginning with January 15, 1929, until the sum of \$1288.00 shall have been paid and the sum of \$3212.00 in 5 years after the date thereof, with interest thereon until maturity at 6 per cent per annum, payable monthly from October 15, 1928 computed on the balance of said principal sum remaining unpaid on the fifteenth day of each and every month in each year, beginning with November 15, 1928; all of said principal and interest bearing interest after maturity at the highest rate of interest permitted to contract under the laws of the State of Illinois and all of said principal and interest payments are to be made at The First National Bank of Chicago, Illinois or at such other place as may be directed by the Trustee herein. The identity of the said principal note is evidenced by the certificate thereon of said Trustee.

Conveys and warrants Lots 5 and 6 of George E. Bowen's Subdivision in Elgin, Kane County, Illinois, as recorded in the office of the Recorder, together with the tenements &c and the rents, issues and profits thereof and all fixtures that may be placed in any building now or hereafter to be placed or erected on said land including all building material which is to be used for the erection of the proposed dwelling referred to herein.

Grantor covenants and agrees to erect a dwelling on the premises and completely finish same in good workmanlike manner and to be ready for occupancy within 4 months after date hereof, said dwelling after being completed to cost not less than \$8100.00.

It is expressly agreed and understood that the entire amount of the consideration heretofore expressed, which this Trust Deed is hereby securing is to be used and applied solely for the erection and construction of said dwelling on the premises as heretofore mentioned and is not to be used or applied for any other purpose whatsoever



1944-1945

Wall Dist. 100 (1967)



5. Special Assessment (Warrant Number 2176 County Court) for system



PLACE BUILDING PAPER BETWEEN  
SUB FLOOR AND FINISHED FLOOR

8'-3" OPENING

SECTION 205

CASED OPENING 8'0" X 7'0"

14' 10 7/16"

SUN PARLOR

4'-8 13/16"

WINDOW OPENING  
2'-7 1/2"  
SASH 2'-4" X 2'-1"

SECTION  
203 3/4"

SECTION 200

DOOR AND WINDOW OPENING 7'-2"

SASH 5'-5 1/2" DOOR 3'-0" X 7'-0" X 1 3/4"

28'-0" FRONT

FIRS

1X3 BACKING

2X4 STUD

2X4 STUD

2X4 PLATE

2X4 PLATE

DETAIL OF 1X3 BACKING  
ON PARTITION CORNERS

DETAIL OF 1X3 BACKING  
ON PARTITION CORNERS

3'-8 7/8"

WINDOW OPENING

1'-8 1/2"

SASH 1'-5 1/2" X 3'-2"

SECTION  
200 1/4"

1'-6"

MULL 2'-10" X 5'-2"

6'-6 3/8" WINDOW OPENING

16"

16"

16"

16"

16"

16"

8 7/8"

16"

16"

16"

4'-7 1/4"

SECTION 203 1/2"

| REVISION                 | DATE  | BY   |
|--------------------------|-------|------|
| BRACE ADD TO SEC 205     | 10-23 |      |
| PARCEL DEN. CHGD         | 10-23 | B.K. |
| SEC 203 3/4" CHGD TO "A" | 12-24 | W.W. |
| CHGD TO "A"              | 2-24  | G.K. |
| CHGD TO "A"              | 2-24  | G.K. |

**HONOR BILT  
MODERN HOME N**

DRAWN BY G. K. TRACED BY G. K. CHECKED BY G. K.  
DATE 2-23-24 DATE 2-23-24 DATE 3-4-24