

WHEAT/RICHARDSON HOUSE

835 Cedar Street
1902 - Architect unknown
Queen Anne Style

The house at 835 Cedar was built in 1902 for Almeron Wheat, Jr. a Quincy attorney. Wheat married Mira Buttz Richardson, the widow of Alonza Richardson, another Quincy attorney. A daughter of Alonza and Mira Richardson was Dr. Ethyl Harriet Richardson who was born in Quincy on January 21, 1879 and was one of the earliest licensed female doctors in the state of Illinois. After the death of Mira Richardson Wheat in 1933, Dr. Ethyl Richardson lived and maintained offices in the house at Ninth and Cedar until her death. Dr. Richardson died in Blessing Hospital on her 77th birthday, Saturday, January 21, 1956.

The Queen Anne Style is historically based on the work of English architect Richard Norman Shaw, active in England during the 1860's and 1870's. Shaw's work was revivalist in character and he drew his inspiration from the architecture of the period of Queen Anne in the 17th century. The first important buildings in the Queen Anne style constructed in the United States were the British Buildings erected in Philadelphia for the Centennial Exhibition of 1876.

The characteristics of the Queen Anne style that are in evidence in the Wheat/Richardson House are the strong picturesque quality of the house; the roof forms and the large columned, wrap-around front porch, often known as the "great American porch."

The plan of the house is similar to contemporary late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses in its suite arrangement of stair hall, parlor, back parlor (library) and dining room. The front door leads from the broad porch directly to a large stair hall that gives access to the second floor. The stair hall is an important feature in the special development of the house in that the vertical space of the staircase unites the first and second floors. The stair hall is open to the main parlor of the house to the east with the library directly behind it and separated by large sliding doors. The woodwork in both of these rooms is butternut and the mantels of the working fireplaces are walnut. The library was Dr. Richardson's office. The hall and the dining room both have oak woodwork. The sliding

doors are faced with the wood to match the rooms they enclose. The family room was originally the kitchen and the woodwork is pine. The basement stair and the back stair depart from this room. The present kitchen is a later addition. The stained glass in the entry, front parlor and dining room is original while that in the library and family room is more recent and has an Art Nouveau feeling.

The second floor follows the suite arrangement of the first floor. The master bedroom and sitting room are over the library and parlor respectively. The kitchenette off of the sitting room was probably intended as a nursery. A second bedroom is over the dining room. All of the woodwork on this floor is pine except the mantel in the sitting room which is oak and shows very strong Eastlake influence.

A previous owner converted the house into several apartments. The original bath is now a part of the one remaining apartment in the house and a new bath is located off of the master bedroom. The basement is fully finished and can function as a complete apartment.

The current owners are Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Holtman who purchased the house in July of 1985 and have undertaken an extensive renovation project. They were guided by the fortunate discovery of many glass negatives of the early years when the house was occupied by Dr. Richardson. The Holtmans have incorporated an exceptionally tasteful decor in keeping with the character of the house. Several mantels had been removed and had been boxed in. The Holtmans uncovered these and restored the fireplaces throughout the house to working order. An unusual discovery from both early photographs and actual on-site inspection was that the house always had wall-to-wall carpeting; the floors not being hardwood but unfinished pine. The floor covering in the parlor and library is wool in 27-inch strips!

Mr. and Mrs. Holtman are to be congratulated for taking a house on Quincy's north side, which was once the prime residential neighborhood, and returning it to the glory it once knew.