

1269 Kentucky Street



Year Built:

1891

Name of House:

**Robert C. and Anna
Gunther House**

Style:

High Queen Anne

*Behind Closed Doors Tour
October 19, 2002*

Robert Gunther was the owner of Gunther Hardware Company when he built this highly embellished Queen Anne house, which is believed to be located on one of the original south Park Place lots. The Gunther's patterned masonry house is awash with features that speak to the wealth of the hardware store owner, whose picture hangs in the dining room. The large wrap around porch has 120 turned spindles and substantial lathe-turned porch posts. The starburst pattern in the porch pediment was a popular decoration of the times and is said to represent the idea that the industrial revolution was the dawn of a new era. The medallion in the railing was carved by the previous owner who was a furniture designer. Cast, radiused brick is used on the house corners, at the doors and windows and on the chimney. Two stained glass transoms and a carved oak double front door add to the richness of the exterior.

On the front of the house, notice the brick basket weave design on the top course, and the terra cotta tile with an egg and dart border. The chimney has another decorative panel. The roofing is metal patterned shingles, an expensive, rarely-seen roofing material. A two story bay is on the east side of the house.

The magnificent staircase hall, or foyer, has more features that set it apart from other Victorian houses. Notice the floor which has a banded, ribbon pattern with oak, maple, walnut and cherry woods. The pattern continues into the dining room. The butternut staircase is special, with a starting newel that has a distressed, stippled background and sunbursts that echo the carving on the porch gable. The railing is hand carved.

Two sets of butternut pocket doors allowed parts of the house to be closed off for heating purposes or for privacy. Between the front and back parlors is a butternut dowel and ball grille. The living room mantle, which looks like an organ top, is not original but the lower section is original. The kitchen cabinets are new and were hand made by the previous owner who also carved the grapevine pattern in the cornice. Notice the clever use of the original butler's pantry.

As might be expected in a successful hardware store owner, the house has a grand display of special door and window hardware, such as square door knobs and brass hinge plates and ball point hinges.

