

Love at first sight

Carla Gordon felt an immediate bond with the William Bull House. So she strived to make restoration work authentic.

By Jim Lenz

Herald-Whig Staff Writer

In 1887, what is now Jersey Street was a cattle walk. Cows grazed in a pasture behind the house at 222 S. 16th.

The house, completed that year, was a wedding present from Lorenzo Bull to his son, William, and his new daughter-in-law. At that time, the property extended almost to Kentucky Street.

The cattle are gone, but the home still sits on a large lot — over an acre. These days it belongs to Carla Gordon.

"When I walked in (the house for the first time seven years ago) I knew within five minutes that it was the house I wanted to live in," Gordon said.

Before Gordon's family moved in, the house underwent an extensive renovation. Gordon researched Queen Anne architecture from the time period to make sure the restoration was authentic. She also kept a photographic record of the interior restoration work.

The house had been divided into a main residence and apartments; Gordon converted it back to a single-family dwelling.

What is now the living room once was a parlor and library separated by a wall with an arch over the doorway. A previous owner took down the wall. Gordon had the woodwork, which had been painted white, restored to its original finish and had flocked wallpaper removed.

"The results were fabulous," she said.

Despite some changes for convenience — modern wiring, plumbing, heating and

the addition of air conditioning — Gordon has made a determined effort to maintain the original look of the home.

One older photograph showed little shrubbery around the house. Over the years, owners had added trees. Gordon donated the trees to the Park District so she could recapture the original open look of the veranda.

The original boiler, now unused, still sits in the basement. Gordon said the heating system was unique. Radiators were mounted under the floor rather than above it. Warm air rose over the radiators and into flush air ducts in the floors. Three porcelain grates for those ducts remain in the house.

One especially noteworthy feature is the immense casement window on the grand stairway landing. The windows may have been designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, who was an apprentice of the architect, Joseph L. Silsbee. Another original feature is the leaded-glass library shelving that flanks the right side of the fireplace.

Most of the windows in the house have their original glass, Gordon said. The house has a large number of windows,

which offers a lot of natural lighting.

On the exterior, Gordon had the north and south stairways replaced. And neighborhood friends helped replace a crumbling concrete sidewalk with bricks discarded from a Quincy street.

Gordon's training as an artist gives her a special appreciation of the architecture of the house, and she strives for continuity between it and furnishings.

Fortunately, most of the furniture she acquired while living in Europe fit the house quite well. And Gordon is proud of the many furnishings that have come from auctions in the Quincy area. She feels it is a Quincy house and the furnishings should reflect that.

All the living previous owners have toured the house since Gordon has owned it, and the house was included on the 1990 Quincy Preserves tour.

"I was amazed at the interest people expressed in the house," she said. "It was the first time in a long time the house was opened to the public."

This is another in a series on homes of historical or architectural significance as identified by Quincy Preserves.



The William Bull House sits at the corner of Jersey and 16th streets.

H-W Photos/Michael Kipley



An example of the German craftsmanship in the house. This intricate carving is on the balustrade to the main staircase. These were made by German craftsmen from St. Louis.

AT A GLANCE

■ **Original Name:** William Bull House

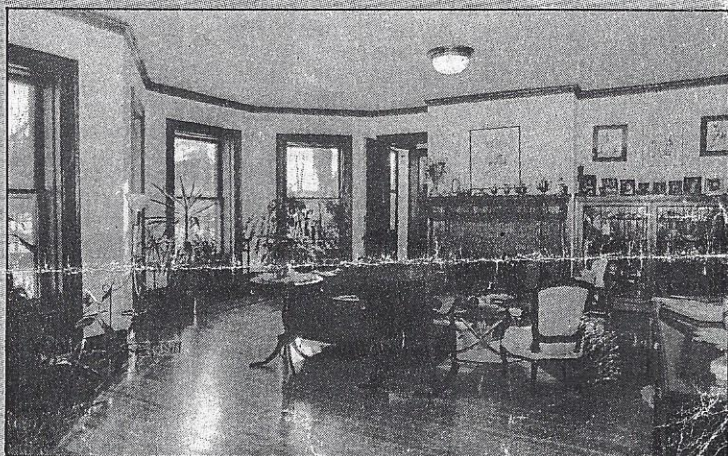
■ **Date Of Construction:** 1887

■ **Architect:** Joseph L. Silsbee

■ **Style:** Queen Anne/shingle

■ **Outstanding features:**

- The first story is brick; wood is used from the second story up.
- The wall surface of the upper stories is wood shingle, some laid in a wave pattern.
- The steeply pitched hip roof cross gables meet the hip on all four elevations.
- Four tall brick chimneys interrupt the roof line on the south, west and north elevations.
- Dormers on the north and south elevations have eyebrow roof forms.
- A full facade porch wraps around to the north side. A false balcony with iron balustrade is placed above the porch on the second story.
- An octagonal tower springs from the south corner of the porch and is topped by a bell-shaped dome roof. A two-story, semi-circular tower on the south elevation becomes a balcony with an octagonal balustrade at the third level.
- The porch is supported by brick piers and round wood columns that taper toward the bottom.
- A Palladian window is centered under the gable of the facade.



The living room. One of the porcelain grates sits to the lower left. The only remaining bookcase from the original library sits to the right.