# 510 N. Worth

## Colonial Revival
## Built 1927

In 1927, Walter J. Giertz was a handsome, broad-shouldered man, looking every bit like the successful builder of highways and prominent buildings that he was. His wife, Erna, was a slender woman with wavy brown hair, an attractive face and a ready smile. Together they began constructing 510 N. Worth Ave. The property, located on what was then Elgin's far west side, consisted of four lots surrounded by open fields and empty city blocks. Walter attended to the details of erecting this handsome brick home while Erna began laying out the sprawling landscape gardens, which would occupy much of her time over the next 61 years. Two of the lots were subsequently sold, but the heart of Erna's gardens remains today.

The Giertzes never had children; however, they left a legacy in the house and gardens for future owners to enjoy and maintain. Walter passed away in 1953. Erna stayed in the house until her death in 1986. The next owners were educator Greg Vogel and his wife, Aileen. They were careful stewards of this fine residence. They had it featured on an Elgin garden walk. The Vogels updated the kitchen and installed the extensive brick patios.

In 2006, Michael and Trudi Haskins became the third owners. The couple found their way to Elgin after growing up and living in several states throughout mid-America. The first time they saw the house the Haskinses experienced an immediate connection with the home. "It felt right," Trudi says. Here was a large, comfortable home that was a perfect setting for both their antique and their more modern furniture. The house is ideal for seasonal decorating, with ample amounts of space to work with. The Haskinses usually set up several Christmas trees in each room throughout the house. They also enjoy the opportunities for both indoor and outdoor entertaining. It is easy to see why

gardening has taken up most of their spare time.

The Haskinses were attracted to Elgin because of the pricing, quality and availability of older homes. In addition to its warm and inviting features, this home had the added attractions of easy highway access (they both travel extensively and commute), "wonderful neighbors," and the nearby golf course. Michael calls it "the old-style neighborhood feeling," complete with bike riders and dog walkers. "It is the perfect tonic for people on the go," Trudi says. "Being in the house and gardens is like being on vacation." The couple have also enjoyed their relationship with Elgin by taking in festivals, restaurants and cultural activities. Living here has turned out to be an unexpected pleasure. Out-of-town visitors are also frequently surprised by what they find when arriving at 510 N. Worth Ave.

The Haskinses have had an opportunity to enjoy a special connection to the original owners, the Giertzes. Not long after moving in, the Haskinses were having work done on the house. To their surprise, the worker was a friend of the Giertzes' niece, and she had home movies taken of the house in about 1940. These were transferred to DVD and given to the Haskinses. What an added sense of connection to the home and the original family these films create! The movies provide a glimpse of the house, gardens and surrounding neighborhood 70 years ago. It is clear that the Giertzes' extended-family are enjoying the house and surroundings.

## *Architectural Notes*

Nationwide, the Colonial Revival Style is generally associated with the period of 1890 to about 1940, although it continues to inspire home designs even today. In Elgin, the style was most popular in the years from about 1900 to 1930. Typical to all the Revival styles, as time passed, elements of other architectural motifs were incorporated into some of the designs. This home is a good example. In this home, a hipped roof with broad eaves, which are Prairie-Style elements, have replaced the traditional side-gable roof and small eaves. The windows are larger and wider than those typically found on Colonial Revival homes. Plus, the windows are divided into multiple panes only on the top sash - these are also Prairie-Style features. The front entry portico uses slender round columns and a simple arched roof rather than the classical-style pediment with all its embellishments. The roof and attic have a single, rather large dormer, whereas many Colonial Revival homes will use several small dormers with front-facing gable roofs.

The home retains the Colonial Revival-Style room layout. There is a prominent, centrally located staircase with the living and dining rooms flanking the reception hall. In this house, like 300 Vincent Place, the other Colonial Revival-Style home on the tour, there is a sunroom on the south side. Both homes are wonderful examples of individuality and variation within the same architectural style.