

# 225 Villa



## A Villa With Class

"The avant garde of European and English architecture was showing its influence in America. The iridescent art glass windows of Louis C. Tiffany had been exhibited at the Paris Exposition one decade prior. The language of classicism was heard spoken by architects: Pennsylvania Station in New York City was nearing completion. Ground was broken for the new Saint John's Lutheran Church in Elgin and the Elgin National Watch Company's astronomical observatory had opened. The year was 1910."

So writes Brian Anderson, the current owner of 225 Villa. He makes no

claims to the house, although his name is on the deed. He is merely living in another person's house - another person who lived there for 46 years.

In 1910, Mrs. Angeline T. Corbey commissioned the house at 225 Villa to be built, as her new residence. Mrs. Corbey did have two children, so it seems there was an elusive Mr. Corbey in the picture somewhere, although the house was built in Angeline's name. Retained as its architect was William Wright Abell, who had worked for the Elgin Watch Company for 18 years, and had since leaving there, opened his own prac-

tice as an architect, with offices in Chicago and Elgin.

Brian Anderson was interested in and bought the house because it was altered very little over the years, and has most of its architectural integrity intact. He himself is very interested in architecture and the arts, and as only the fourth owner of this house, he will, no doubt, give it the proper care and upkeep which will keep it authentic for many years to come.

Brian is a relative of Conrad Ackemann, whose 1901 home is on the tour this year as the "Restoration in Progress." It was in the home at 582 Park Street that Conrad's wife painted the picture which now hangs in Brian's sewing room. Many of his other furnishings and photos have been passed down through the Ackemann family, or came with the house, giving it an especially historic ambience.

The stucco exterior is original, a common exterior for the American Foursquare, which this house appears to be, at its simplest explanation, but Brian will tell you otherwise. He will say that, "reposed above the street, the house displays features extolled in

the modern English Domestic style of the day and the native transcription of such. A purism of geometry combines with classical restraint and details into which is incorporated the artistic license of the architect. The projecting balcony with shingle clad vertical surfaces geometric corbels, ornamental supports and quatrefoil are also specialties of W.W. Abell."

"Inside is a theme of indigenous and exotic flora pervading the design and ornamentation of the room - especially manifest in the leaded windows, door and transom."

The kitchen has a delightful late 1930s decor, complete with original clock and luminaire. Only the countertop and sink have been altered.

If you get the chance, take a walk down through the backyard, and view the garage from the alley. You'll see the extraordinary care that was taken by Angel Corbey when she turned a barn into a garage/workshop, complete with heat, plumbing and water, and maintaining the barn facade too!

