

**Morris Avenue, S.E.**

**245 Morris S.E.** Built in 1893 by Otto Thum, this Shingle / Craftsman home is readily identifiable because of the massive gambroiled gable which dominates the façade. Mr.



Thum was one of the founders of the O & T Thum Company, better known throughout the world as the Tanglefoot Company. The company's fame and fortune were built on its primary product, "sticky fly paper." The Thum Company was also one of the first to establish a pension plan for its employees; however, this fact is, somehow, not as memorable as those once so familiar rolls of Tanglefoot Fly Paper. (Photo: David Hanks, 1974 Heritage Hill Association calendar.)

**258 Morris S.E.** This Prairie Style home was built about 1914 by Edward and Christine Tannewitz. Mr. Tannewitz was the founder of Tannewitz Works, a manufacturer of



sawing machinery. The design was a departure from the Victorian style. The low, sloping slate roof, rectilinear massings, and a Palladian dormer are all parts of the Prairie style that became popular prior to World War I. Inside, amenities loved by Victorians remain: bookcases, china cabinet, oak / mahogany pocket doors, and leaded glass windows, as well as a maid's quarters with a private toilet and sink. Mahogany woodwork runs through the house from the mantel in the living room

to the butler's pantry in the kitchen. Four side-by-side windows in the dining room have detailed glass work. An antebellum-like staircase leads to four large bedrooms. Each closet has a built-in dresser. The art glass in this house matches that found in the Meyer May house at 450 Madison S.E. Craig Nobbelin purchased the house in 1985. The front garden and the Japanese garden were designed by Stephen Rosselet, the lead designer of the Frederik Meijer Gardens. (Photo: 1997 Heritage Hill Home Tour, p. 10.)

262 Morris S.E. This house dates from 1895.

300 Morris S.E. Another version of the Prairie-style home, this one was built in 1917 on the last open lot on this block for Frederick C. Oltman, advertising manager for Herpolsheimer's Department Store. Gardens front and back are the design of 1998 owner Kay Courtney.

316 Morris S.E. This was the home of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg. He died here in 1950-51.

**319 Morris S.E.** The Huggett House. Built in 1913 by Martin C. Huggett, this home is imbued with a sense of substance which was highly desirable in the post-Victorian era



when smaller residences were favored because of the difficulty of maintaining a large domestic staff. The sweeping roof lines and pointed gables of the English thatched cottage are emphasized in this American adaptation, with the rolled edge on the eaves. The leaded casement windows with their vertical impact and gentle arches are a typical English feature. Mr. Huggett, attorney, banker, and self-taught architect, came to Grand Rapids in 1901 to practice law with William Alden Smith, who was at that time serving in the United States House of

Representatives. In 1913, Mr. Huggett joined the former City Trust and Savings Bank as Vice President. In 1920, he left the bank to join Kenneth C. Welch in the practice of architecture. Of interest is the fact that this home was the first one in the country to have an asphalt shingle roof. It was featured in a national advertising campaign by the Reynolds Roofing Company. In August, 1962, owner Robert Lea requested Zoning Board approval to use this one-family dwelling for rooming and lodging of four roomers. In September, 1963, Marius Broekhuizen requested approval to use the house for three roomers on the second floor and one apartment on the first floor. The house stands on a lot 50' x 132'. (Photo: James Starkey, 1980 Heritage Hill Association calendar.)

**332 Morris S.E.** The McMullen House. Built in 1908 by Mrs. William C. McMullen, the widow of a Grand Rapids lumberman, this stucco home with its rounded arches and protruding rafter ends under the eaves



lends a western flavor to the Morris Avenue streetscape. In 1912, Louis Braudy, a member of the Board of Public Works and director of the Fourth National Bank, made his home here. Ten years later, the Herman Stern family resided at this address. Although the home never suffered the abuse which placed many of its neighbors in jeopardy, it grew "tired" over the years. Today, its owners, in true Heritage Hill fashion, are painstakingly restoring the home to its original gracious appearance. A substantial structure, the

eclecticism of its architectural elements gives the house its individuality, a characteristic which is one of the most recognizable features of Heritage Hill homes. (Photo: James Starkey, 1978 Heritage Hill Association calendar.)

**401 Morris S.E.** This lot was once owned by Frank D. McKay of 411 Morris S.E., and became the site for the home of banker Delbert Power. Built in 1926, it eventually



became the home of Mr. McKay's son, Frank J. McKay, in 1937. This house, like its "parent" immediately to the south, has received good care over the years so that what is seen today is pretty much the image the original owners enjoyed. Oak hardwood and ceramic tile floors invite visitors traversing from room to room. Many original electrical fixtures and sconces adorn the walls. Large closets throughout, unusual for the period, provide ample storage space for a family

of the 1990's. A private garden in the rear continues the warmth of the house itself. In 1998: Dave and Cathy Hathaway. (Photo: *Grand Rapids Magazine*, October, 1998, p. 28.)

**411 Morris S.E.** The McKay House. Very few changes have altered the integrity of this house since it was built in 1924 for Frank D. McKay at a cost of \$40,000. It reflects the earliest Prairie form--low-pitched hipped

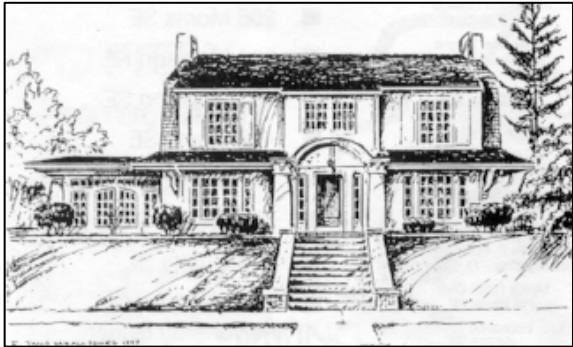


tile roof with a Regency center dormer, symmetrical façade with centered front entry, the open brackets supporting the porch roof, the decorative stone work of the porch, and transomed French windows. The simple square plan and balanced lines of this house give it a look of stability and permanence. The most common version of the Prairie style, the American Four-Square, developed from this form. Benefiting from the long

residency of its original owners, Frank D. and Irene McKay (owner of the McKay Lumber Co. and the McKay Building Co.), many, if not most, of the wall coverings and fixtures in this house are original. The workmanship and quality of life of the mid-1920's are displayed in the walnut and mahogany woodwork throughout, as well as original silk wall coverings; the two wall murals, one in the sun room and one in the basement, believed to be by Mathias Alten; and the original tiled bathrooms. Many amenities representative of a finer lifestyle include a servant's callbox, an indoor water fountain, and a walk-in safe. Curt Benson and Jane Markey own this house in 1998. While remodeling the basement family room, they uncovered a Mathias Alten mural, estimated to have been painted about 1924. Local artist Mic Carlson restored the mural. Frank McKay was one of Grand Rapids' most colorful politicians. From 1914 until the early 1960's, he was the partner of George Welsh. Together they created a powerful political team--Welsh was the idea man, McKay the financier. In the 1930's, McKay acquired the Grand Rapids National Bank building on Campau Square and renamed it the McKay Tower. Until the early 1980's, the McKay Tower was the tallest building in the city because of a zoning ordinance that prohibited the construction of any building taller than 14 stories. (Photo:

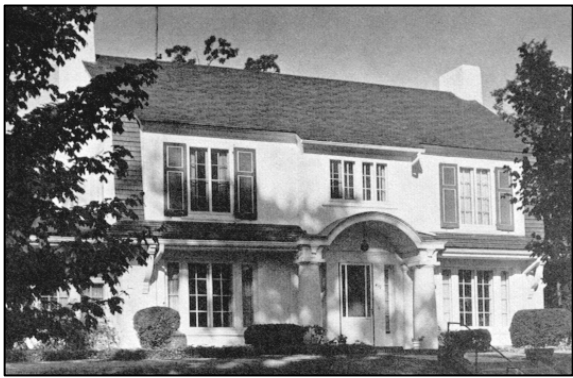
*Grand Rapids Magazine*, October, 1998, p. 28.)

**419 Morris S.E.** The Snow House. Warren H. Snow, a partner in the Grand Rapids stock brokerage firm of Howe, Snow and Bertels, which later became a branch of the



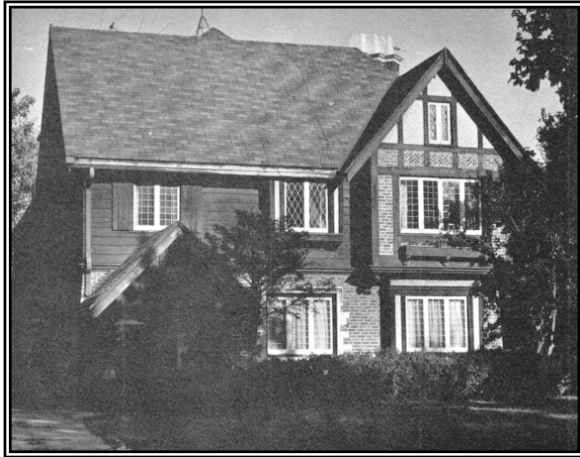
E.H. Rollins & Sons Company of New York, built this graceful and spacious home in 1915-16. This style of architecture was originally known as Dutch Colonial or Gambrelled. Gambrelled roofs are basically barn roofs which, when applied to a residential structure, open up more living space on the second or third story. The house has all the symmetrical features typical to a Colonial Revival home--chimneys at both

ends, large paired multi-paned windows, shutters and pierced brackets. The graceful entryway features a Regency portico supported by Tuscan columns and pilasters. Pierced brackets appear to support the overhang between the first and second stories. The shutters are both attractive and functional. The resident who lived in this home the longest was attorney and municipal court judge John Letts, who was the first African American judge in Grand Rapids. He and his wife, Agatha, lived here from the mid 1960's to the 1980's. The house in 1997 is home to



Robert Ball and Denise Olson-Ball and daughter, Sophia Ball. They have lived here since 1989 and have extensively restored their home. The kitchen was completed in 1997. A spacious and winding mahogany staircase with white spindles leads upstairs from the foyer. Three sets of French doors, opening into the spectacular gardens and yard from the living room and sunroom, give this house a decidedly southern feel. Large windows fill the house with light to view a wonderful antique collection. The original African mahogany woodwork in the living room caught fire while a contractor was stripping it in 1992, and has been replaced with Honduran mahogany. Sconces, fireplaces, and hardwood floors are architectural details restored by the owners. (Sketch, top: 1997 Heritage Hill Home Tour, p. 6. Photo, bottom: James Starkey, 1979 Heritage Hill Association calendar.)

**434 Morris S.E.** The Stiles House. Harry F. Stiles designed and built this home in 1921. Mr. Stiles was the president of Togan-Stiles, Inc., manufacturers of factory-made buildings and retail lumber.



A prominent businessman, Mr. Stiles and his brothers, Frederick and Walter, gained control of WOOD Radio in 1926, after the Furniture Manufacturers Association withdrew monetary support from the station. The English Tudor style of architecture is reflected in this house with its multiple mullioned, leaded-glass windows. The third floor and the center window of the second floor are highlighted by diamond panes. An unusual feature is the use of siding on the second-story elevation instead of stucco, with the addition of decorative brickwork in a herringbone

pattern on the front gable. A closer look reveals an inviting arched portico and doorway, complimented by attractive stonework around both the door and the front window. The chimney is distinctively English. By the time this house was planned, the lot was one of only three choice lots left in the downtown area. One was immediately adjacent to Mr. Stiles' lot and the third was on Gay Avenue. (Photo: James Starkey, 1979 Heritage Hill Association calendar.)



**440 Morris S.E.** This modified Federal-style home was built in 1923 by Mr. and Mrs. Siegel W. Judd, and is distinguished by its rectilinear design, typified by a perfectly



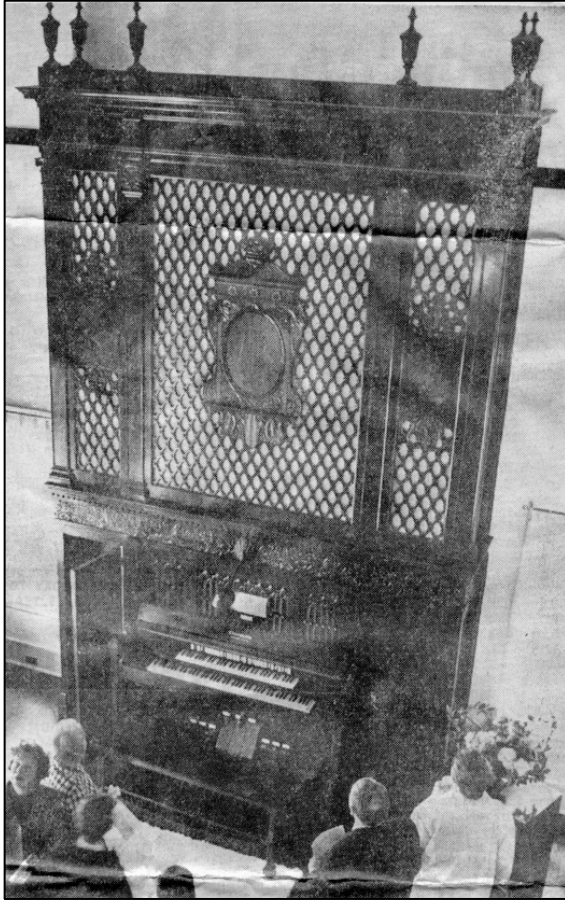
symmetrical façade. Mr. Judd, a prominent attorney, practiced corporation law, and became a partner in the law firm of Warner, Norcross & Judd. Mrs. Judd was a granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Leonard. Mr. Leonard developed the large refrigerator manufacturing business which was sold to Kelvinator in 1926. The Leonards, who lived at 455 Morris S.E. on the northwest corner of Logan, had a custom of presenting large cash gifts to their

grandchildren on the occasion of their marriages, with the understanding that the funds be used to build or purchase a home near the grandparents. During the early and mid-1920's, most of their progeny lived within a block or two of their home. (Photo: David Hanks, 1975 Heritage Hill Association calendar.)

**455 Morris S.E.** The Leonard House. This home was built in 1914 by Charles H. Leonard. It is an excellent example of villa-style Mediterranean architecture, with leaded



French windows, tile roof, and a copper-plated front door. The interior of this home is as fascinating as the façade, featuring a two-story living room with a 22½-foot ceiling to accommodate a handsomely ornate organ, which was installed in 1916. The instrument, which also doubles as a player piano, cost \$35,000 new, plus an installation charge of \$7,500. The living room also features a graceful stairway leading to a balcony at one end, beamed ceilings, and solid mahogany woodwork with marquetry inlays. Many distinguished visitors to Grand Rapids, including Winston Churchill and Queen Marie of Romania, were entertained in these gracious surroundings. In 1882, Mr. Leonard organized and became president of the Grand Rapids Refrigeration Company, which later became the Leonard Refrigerator Company and finally Kelvinator when Mr. Leonard sold the business in 1926. For some years in the 1980's and early 1990's, this home was occupied as The Bridge, a home for runaway teens. (Photos: top, David Hanks, for the Heritage Hill Association, c. 1975; bottom, Grand Rapids Press Photograph, Wednesday, May 21, 1969.)



**511 Morris S.E.** The Yeakey House. John Yeakey built his home in 1924 on the last remaining vacant lot on this street. A leader in the Grand Rapids business community,



he founded and owned several companies, including Yeakey-Scripps, Wheeler-Van Label Co., and the Boston Store. When he built his house, Mr. Yeakey selected the Morris Avenue location because he was working at Herpolsheimer's and many of his associates lived nearby. This house takes its stylings from all the best of the English, with its Jacobethian portico and Tudor gables. Built during Prohibition, the house incorporated many "practical" extras, such as a lockable closet under the basement stairs to house bootlegged refreshments.

The inviting tented canopy over the terrace recalls the tranquillity of an age when urban life was oriented to the street. (Photo: James Starkey, 1977 Heritage Hill Association calendar.)

**515 Morris S.E.** The Hoult House. This 1921 Arts and Crafts house is a charming English flat. It was built by Thomas Hoult,

the general manager for the Stone-Hoult Furniture Co. By the 1980's, the stucco-covered house had become very dilapidated. The front window had rotted out and radiators had burst. Jerry and Barbara VanLeeuwen bought the house in 1992. (Photo: 1997 Heritage Hill Home Tour, p. 10.)

