

# BRI NEWS

Fall 2014



**Matthews House  
Headlines Historic  
Grindle Tour**

# Restoration's Reason

with Henry Glassie

The house had endured for nearly a century. In that sense it could be called historic. But it remained unfinished, bland in appearance. Years of architectural study told me what to do. In time, the Sturbaum brothers would wrap a porch around it, the Jenkins crew would paint it the rich yellow of old Swedish houses, and Marsh Davis would choose it to be one of the ninety-nine in his handsome book on Indiana's historic homes.

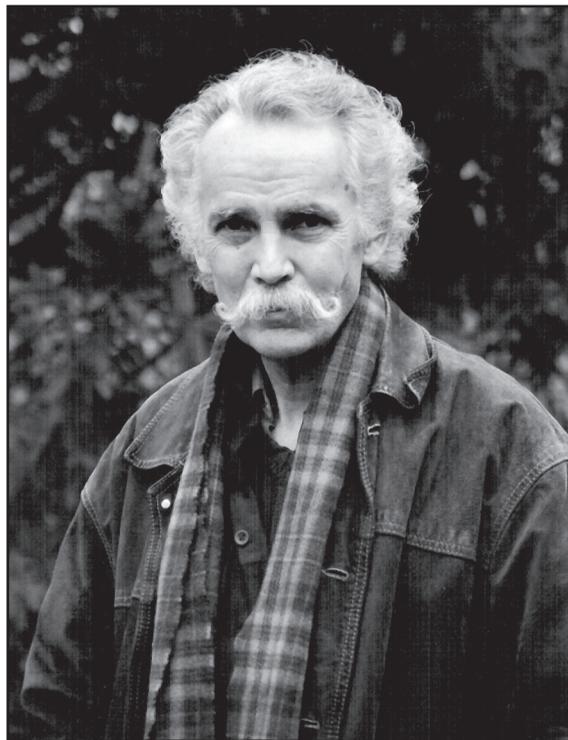
We began inside, filling dumpsters outside. My strong son and I knocked out partitions, tore down ceilings, releasing a shower of sooty dust, and we took the walls down to the studs, preparing for the men who would hang new sheetrock – drywall you call it in Indiana. The drywall guys would pause in their work to watch, amused that some professor could manage a miter box well enough to craft trim for irregular corners.

Old, but not old enough to be well made, the house was faulty in engineering. The floors pitched like the sea, and, never quite finished, they had been hidden by wall-to-wall carpeting, now rolled up in a dumpster. I was on my knees, attacking paint dots with a putty knife, when a man appeared in the doorway. We had nodded in passing, and now, saying he was off for a fishing trip, he tossed a ring of keys toward me. While his keys slid along the floor, he said we could use his house while he was gone – our water was off, the kitchen was a hollow

shell – and his pickup would be handy for hauling lumber. The screen door banged shut, and he was gone.

His was a characteristic act of casual Hoosier neighborliness. The preservation of neighborliness is the goal.

When I first lived in Bloomington there had been no BRI. At the mayor's request, Warren Roberts and I walked the streets, noting sites of importance, and writing the first historic preservation guidelines for the city. The oldest houses were our interest. When I returned, fifteen years later, Bloomington Restorations Incorporated had been established. The Paris-Dunning project was of prime significance,



architecturally and historically, but most of the work of BRI has been devoted to restoring modest houses and making them available at affordable prices. The purpose has been to preserve pieces of the past so that Bloomington can continue to look like itself, remaining a location for community, an evocative place, safe for neighborliness.

# New Life for Old Home

*Once doomed bungalow now ready for new life*



**B**RI this summer completed restoration of a circa 1920 bungalow near Bryan Park. The house is now for sale and ready for a new homeowner as part of BRI's Affordable Housing Program.

The two-bedroom bungalow was destined for demolition at its original site on North Dunn near Eighth Street. Instead, BRI acquired the house from Indiana University and moved it to a vacant lot at 1215 S. Stull Ave.

After moving the house onto the lot, we laid a new foundation (reusing the limestone block from the old foundation for the front section) and rebuilt the peak of the roof, which had been cut away to allow the house to fit under overhead lines on the move.

Inside, the house was completely brought up to

code, without sacrificing historic character. Wood floors and plaster walls were refinished, and original windows were repaired and fitted with storm windows. The kitchen was expanded and updated with new appliances and dishwasher, and the bathroom overhauled and upgraded with new ceramic tile tub/shower surround.

A high efficiency gas furnace and central air conditioning were added along with new insulation to reduce energy consumption.

The project was made possible by federal affordable housing grant dollars awarded by the City of Bloomington Housing and Neighborhood Development Department. The house is the 24<sup>th</sup> home restored by the BRI Affordable Housing Program.

## New Prospect Hill Projects

*BRI acquires two houses to restore*

The BRI Affordable Housing Program is moving back into the Prospect Hill Neighborhood for its two latest projects. We've acquired run down houses at 823 W. Fourth St. and 619 W. Smith Ave. to restore for low to moderate income families.



619 W. Smith Ave., Bloomington, to be restored



823 W. 4th St., Bloomington, to be restored

## BRI Affordable Housing Program in the News

Did you notice?

The Herald-Times featured the BRI Affordable Housing Program on the front page of the July 30 newspaper. The story by Dann Denny included quotes from homebuyer Brandon Shurr and BRI Executive Director Steve Wyatt.

The BRI Affordable Housing Program has produced 28 houses for low to moderate income homebuyers. Fourteen of the houses were restored on their original sites, 10 were moved to new sites to prevent demolition and then restored, and four were new compatible infill houses built on vacant lots in historic districts.

## Historic Grindle Tour

*Tour offers glimpse inside Grindle's architecture*

Almost 250 people experienced some of Bloomington's most magnificent old buildings as part of BRI's annual tour Oct. 11. For the first time, the public was able to look inside a collection of historic buildings designed by early 20th century architect Alfred Grindle.

There were beautiful stone and stucco houses from the Vinegar Hill district and Elm Heights neighborhood, as well as stately churches. Buildings like the Matthews House, a limestone Tudor Revival gem, were open for the afternoon for people to walk through. Also included were the nearby Tudor Revival Woodward House and Rogers House. There was also a brick duplex in University Courts, and two spectacular churches, the Trinity Episcopal Church and the University Lutheran Church.

Grindle was the architect of the Prairie style Stiehm House, the landmark house at Woodlawn and Eighth streets. The Stiehm House is one of as many as five houses Indiana University plans to save by relocation to nearby lots in advance of new construction.

This is the 38th historic tour organized by BRI. We thank the building owners who opened their doors for the tour, along with the 40 volunteers who gave their time to make the tour possible.



# Bethel A.M.E. Parsonage

*Former parsonage saved with help from BRI*

Bethel A.M.E. Church members had thought their old parsonage next to their Seventh and Rogers street church would have to be demolished. They didn't have the funds to repair the long vacant house, so they sought a demolition permit. Thanks to the city's demolition delay law, the old gabled-ell house got a second chance.

Notified of the demolition request, BRI's Steve Wyatt walked through the house with Rev. Dennis Laffoon and assured him that the house was solid and worth repairing due to the strong near-downtown rental market. BRI put the church in contact with preservation-minded rental property owners who agreed, and were willing to enter into a long-term lease to rehab the structure and rent it out.

Meanwhile, members of the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission agreed the house, part of the National Register West Side Historic District, was

worth saving and began working closely with the church to explore rehabilitation. Convinced of the house's viability, the church decided to seek funding to rehab it themselves. Preservation Commission volunteers helped with everything from rehab plans and preservation consulting to obtaining contractor estimates. Indiana Landmarks offered to provide loan funds through BRI to fill the gap in what rehab would cost and what the church had available.

BRI is borrowed \$37,500 from Indiana Landmarks and loaned it to the church for the project, which will rehab the interior, rebuild a dilapidated addition, and peel back the vinyl siding and fix-up and paint-up the wood exterior.

The house was built about 1916 and served as the church's parsonage from 1925 to 1977. Its last use was as a church rental house through the 1990s.

## FOR SALE from BRI

*Call today to own one of these historic homes*



1215 S. Stull Ave., Bloomington      \$143,900  
A fully restored 1920s bungalow a block from Bryan Park!

2 bedroom, 1 bath      Updated kitchen  
Wood floors, built-in bookcases      New bathroom  
Moved by BRI to prevent it from being demolished  
For a showing or more information, please call  
Deb Tomaro at 812-345-4404.



8121 W. Elm Street, Stinesville      \$29,900  
Turn of the century charm and a double lot. This gabled-ell house dating to the 1890s has a beautiful spindlework porch with turned posts, tall windows and wood floors. Available as-is to anyone who agrees to restore it. Also a possible affordable housing project, please call BRI for details.

*“The old Christian church, on Kirkwood Avenue, has been torn away and it is intended to commence on the foundation of the parsonage Monday.” Bloomington Weekly Telephone, September 6, 1892, p. 1*



## The Last Survivor

*Once a parsonage,  
the Campbell House  
at 213 East Kirkwood  
is one of the last survivors  
in its neighborhood*

by Derek Richey

Not far from the Bloomington town square stands a wonderful brick structure at 213 East Kirkwood. It is one of the last old residential buildings still standing between Indiana Avenue and Washington Streets along Kirkwood. Most of the residential homes along East Kirkwood were demolished between 1950-1975 (about half the houses built before 1920 were razed during these years).

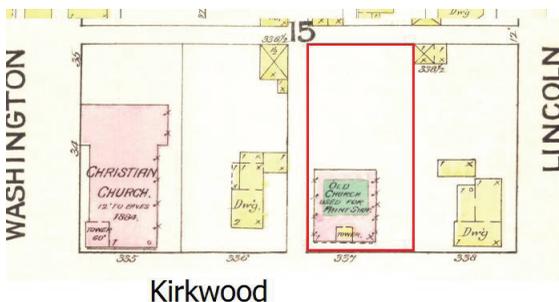
Also known as the Campbell House, 213 E Kirkwood was built around 1892 as a parsonage to the Kirkwood Christian Church. Prior to the new parsonage, a brick structure stood for nearly 50 years in the same spot and served as the Kirkwood Christian Church. When the old church was razed, bricks from the old structure were used to create the new parsonage (a house for the attending Reverend) for the new Kirkwood Christian Church which stood just west of the brick home.

In 1887, the old brick Church was still standing, but

because a new Kirkwood Christian Church had been built to the west, it was used at the time as a printing office for a local paper.

The razed brick church was probably built around 1841, prior to that a log cabin church had been there as early as the 1820s (the original lot was purchased in 1826 by George and Lucy Richey—no known relation to the author of this article). The log and brick church both served as the home for the Christian Church in early Bloomington, even after half the church assembly defected in the 1880s when the anti-organ faction left in protest when a brand new organ was included in daily and weekend services. Apparently 50% of the regulars weren't keen on having music during services.

In the early 1900s, Reverend Joseph C Todd and wife Emily lived in the parsonage. By the 1920s, Reverend William H Smith called the structure home. And in 1940 Minister William Moore and his wife made the parsonage a home.

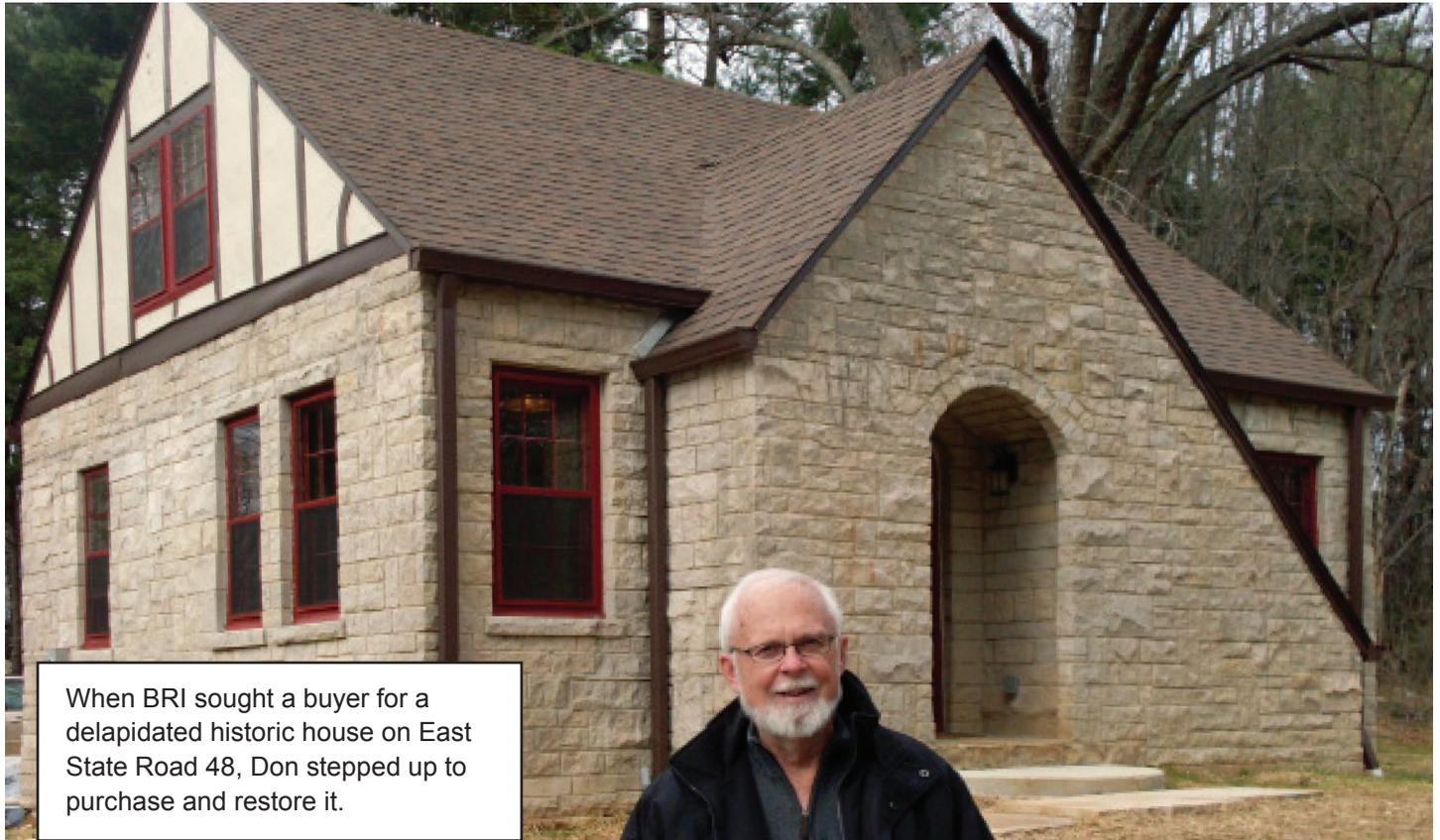


In 1887, the old brick Church (outlined in red) was still standing, but because a new Kirkwood Christian Church had been built to the west, it was used at the time as a printing office for a local paper. Today the Campbell House serves as the offices for the Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County.

# Don Granbois

*Youthful dreams of a career in architecture led this member to play a vital role in BRI*

by Caroline Clay



When BRI sought a buyer for a delapidated historic house on East State Road 48, Don stepped up to purchase and restore it.

In his youth, Don Granbois, 80, dreamed of becoming an architect. Though he ended up making a more pragmatic career choice, upon his retirement as professor of marketing in the IU Kelley School of Business, he found a way to channel that life-long interest in a new direction.

Don joined the Bloomington Restorations, Inc. Board of Directors and became involved in the Affordable Housing Program, now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year. “I’ve always been interested in interiors and design and also in helping people, to make things better for them. It appealed to me on a lot of different levels,” he said.

As a BRI board member and chair of the Affordable Housing Committee he participates in decisions on everything from selection of exterior and interior paint to flooring choices and design details. Paint selections, for example, are made based on what would have been used in the period when the house was built. All the houses BRI has restored or built for the Affordable Housing Program use three colors; one for the body, another for the trim and a third accent color. When choosing exterior paint colors, Don says, it’s important to consider the color of the roof and to

look at neighboring houses. It shouldn’t clash with the houses around it and you also don’t want too many houses in a row all the same color.

When BRI purchases a house for its Affordable Housing Program, committee members look for houses with original windows and doors intact. “The house has to have historical significance. We don’t buy houses that don’t have original windows ... we try to be as authentic as possible,” he said. If they do purchase a house where windows or doors have been replaced or are missing, they will purchase salvaged materials to match the existing ones.

Don notes that flooring often presents challenges when trying to restore a house to its original condition. The expectation is that older houses will have wood floors. “We do what we can to have decent floors but keep the cost down,” Don said. For kitchen and bathroom flooring the preference is to use vinyl, but in a design that matches the period. One of the biggest difficulties in restoring houses for the Affordable Housing Program is finding appropriate materials that are aren’t cost prohibitive. “Being authentic, in good taste and at the same time affordable, it’s kind of a challenge,” Don said.

# join today!

Yes, I want to help save places that matter in Bloomington

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

City, State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please select your membership level:

- |                                                       |                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$20                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Association \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$30              | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Business \$75           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family/Household \$40        | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$100              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit Organization \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining/Corporate \$500    |

In addition to my membership, I would like to make a donation to BRI to the following:

Staff and Operating Fund	\$ _____	Affordable Housing Fund	\$ _____
Endangered Historic Properties Fund	\$ _____	Hinkle-Garton Farmstead	\$ _____
In honor memory of _____			\$ _____

Paid by check # \_\_\_\_\_ in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ payable to Bloomington Restorations, Inc.



**BLOOMINGTON  
RESTORATIONS, INC.**

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