

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION: 33 S. Sheridan Road, Lake Forest, Illinois



Susan S. Benjamin, August 21, 2015



History of the Property

The house at 33 S. Sheridan Road was built in 1959 by Knute Larsen Construction Company at a cost of \$30,414. The architect on the permit was listed as Lawrence T. Smith.¹ It is an example of the Garrison Colonial subtype of Colonial Revival residential architecture--built "on spec" by Knute Larson, whose company is listed as "owner" in the building permit.² The most recent resident was James M. Peery, head of the Peer Group; previous residents include R. Jaros.³

The house is located in an area that was historically the site of very large estate properties owned by prominent Chicago families. Today their vast parcels of property have been subdivided. Edward L. Ryerson's estate house, "Havenwood" (demolished) was located to the south. The area is today surrounded by Ringwood Road. Immediately south and west stands "House in the Woods".⁴ Accessed by a long winding road, the 1916 home of Nettie Fowler (Mrs. Cyrus) McCormick, designed by Dwight Perkins rests on part of a beautiful Jens Jensen-designed landscape. It is one of several large country houses in the Lake Forest Historic District. Large "Contributing" historic houses located in the district relatively near 33 S. Sheridan Road include 161 and 121 N. Sheridan road. The large Classical Revival house at 121 was designed by James Gamble Rogers in 1903.

¹ *Application for a Building Permit and For a Certificate of Occupancy*, The City of Lake Forest. June 18, 1959

² *Ibid.*

³ Peery lived there in 2001, when a permit was issued for reroofing the house. The business associated with him is the "Peer Group" with an address of 33 South Sheridan Road, Lake Forest. Richard R. Jaros was found to live there in 1980, when he applied for a permit to reroof the house. Jaros is head of the "Jaros Family Foundation", at 1160 North Green Bay Road, Lake Forest. Research indicates that he is on the campaign leadership for Lake Forest Academy and that he is a Board Member of Lake Forest Open Lands.

⁴ The location of the property owned by Edward L. Ryerson, surrounded by Ringwood Road and Sheridan Road, and the property owned by Mrs. Cyrus McCormick, may be seen on the "Map of the City of Lake Forest and Environs, Lake County, Illinois," compiled by Neil N. Campbell, Lake Forest, Market Square, 1922.

On the east side of Sheridan Road there are several houses built in the 1950s that reflect the subdivisions that have taken place, nearby, in the district.

Immediately to the north, at **15 N. Sheridan Road**, is a contemporary style ranch house built in 1956 by P. and L. Construction.



At **31 N. Sheridan Road**, there is a Colonial Revival style ranch house built in 1955.



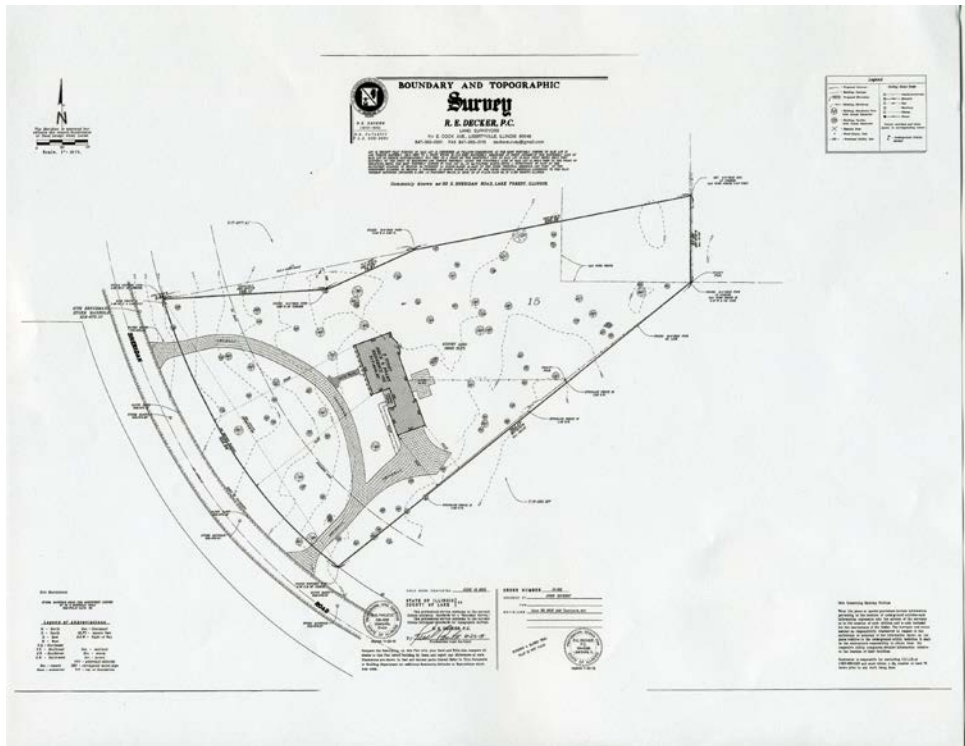
To the south of 33 S. Sheridan Road, at **39 S. Sheridan Road**, is a 2-1/2 story Colonial Revival House with a classical porch. In 2011, when the Lake Forest Historic District was updated, a 1958 Ranch house was located on this lot.⁵



⁵ This information was taken from the inventory that accompanied the Lake Forest Historic District nomination that was revised in 2011.

Lake Forest Historic District

The Lake Forest Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. When this early nomination was re-examined, it was found that there was not a sufficient amount of information to relay the historic significance of Lake Forest. It was further found that many important Lake Forest buildings that were constructed before 1926, when the District was proposed, were called out as "Non-contributing" and clearly were "Contributing" to the significance of the district. Under a grant, the nomination was revised in 2011 by Benjamin Historic Certifications. At that time, the district was resurveyed and buildings that were over 50 years old and were found to have sufficient integrity were listed as "Contributing" to the significance of the district. The house at 33 S. Sheridan Road was one of those properties that was re-evaluated and described as "Contributing" in the revised nomination.



The house at 33 S. Sheridan Road was found to be "Contributing" for several reasons. It rests on a large park-like parcel of property like most houses in the district. It was described as "Contributing" because of its massing, materials, scale and style as well as its age. Its level of artistry was not carefully examined. Like many houses in the district, it is generally rectangular, sheathed in traditional building materials--brick and wood, moderately sized and traditional in style. It also appeared unaltered, so its integrity was found to be high. This review took place without going in the house and without closely examining the exterior and interior details. Listing a building as "Contributing" provides an opportunity to re-evaluate the building when

preservation decisions need to be made, to see if it does appreciably contribute to the significance of the historic district.



The Historic District boundary is located at the east side of Sheridan Road. Those buildings across the street, on the west side of Sheridan Road, and located further west, typically, have a different character from those in the district. They are generally less than 50 years old. In addition, the orientation of the streets is different, with houses facing Greenbrier and Greenview; and the lots are smaller than most in the historic district. Many of the homes along these streets consist of many ranch houses and two-story houses built during the same general time period as 33 S, Sheridan Road.

There are 559 houses in the Lake Forest Historic District. The nomination notes that a high percentage of them are architect designed.⁶ Several were prominent nationally; many were, distinguished. Howard Van Doren Shaw, David Adler, Stanley Anderson are a few of the fine architects who designed homes in the District. The house at 33 S. Sheridan Road has the name of architect Lawrence T. Smith from Northbrook on the Building Permit Application. Research turned up no information on him.⁷

33 South Sheridan Road

Builder: Knute Larson

The builder/developer of 33 S. Sheridan Road was Knute Larson. Larson built a number of houses in Deerpath Hill Estates, including one that is a mirror image of the Sheridan Road House. It is located at **309 King Muir Road**.



309 King Muir Road



33 S. Sheridan Road

⁶ *Lake Forest Historic District*, 2011. P. 4.

⁷ Research turned up material on an architect named Lawrence Lattin Smith. He was a member of the American Institute of Architects and a senior designer at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, then worked at various other architectural firms before opening his own firm in 1945. His firm, L. Lattin Smith & Associates, officed at 53 West Jackson, Chicago. The 1952 A.I.A. Directory lists several commercial buildings but no residences. He appears not to be the same architect who practiced in Northbrook. George S. Koyl, F.A.I.A. *American Architects Directory*. Published under the Sponsorship of the American institute of Architects. New York: R.R. Bower Company, 1962. P 654.

In the Deerpath Hill Estates National Register nomination, it is noted that "Larson was not a large-scale builder; rather he tended to build one home at a time and often, if the home did not sell, he would move into the home until it did sell."⁸ The nomination states that he built several homes in Deerpath Hill Estates, from 1954 to 1968, including several "high quality" ranch houses (one, a ranch at 156 High Holburn), a Dutch Colonial at 145 High Holburn and 309 King Muir Road. At the time that he pulled a building permit for 33 S. Sheridan Road, Larson was living at 985 Mellody Road, a 1958 ranch house in the Deerpath Hill Estates neighborhood. Unlike the area in the *Lake Forest Historic District*, the Deerpath Hill Estates Historic District contains a dense concentration of 1950s and 1960s houses. The nomination notes that there was a building boom in the original section of Deerpath Hill Estates and over 20 homes were built during this period. Some of the houses were built to order for owners, but most homes appeared to have been speculation homes.⁹ The house at 309 King Muir is part of a concentration of homes that characterizes the area, whereas the house at 33 Sheridan Road is more the exception to the character of the Lake Forest Historic District. So, it makes sense that 309 King Muir Road would have been called out as "Contributing".

Several of the houses that Larson built in the Lake Forest Historic District were scattered throughout the district and associated with architects, like Smith, who were not well known. They include houses at 145 N. Sheridan Road (1956, Arnold Schaffer, architect), at 161 N. Sheridan Road (1956, Gerald A. Perkins, architect), at 245 N. Sheridan Road (1954, no architect listed on permit), 936 E. Ringwood (1960, no architect listed on permit) and 999 E. Rosemary (1955, Gerald A. Perkins, architect).



33 S. Sheridan Road, 1959, Lawrence T. Smith, Architect

⁸ *Deerpath Hill Estates Historic District*, 2011. Paul Bergmann. Section E, Page 40.

⁹ *Ibid.* Section E, P. 19-20.

Architectural Style: Garrison Colonial



The house at 33 S. Sheridan Road is a typical example of a late 1950s "Garrison Colonial" subtype of Colonial Revival architecture. And it remains unaltered. The Garrison Colonial, also known as the "second story overhang" subtype is described by Virginia Savage McAlester, in *A Field Guide to American Houses* as "loosely based on Postmedieval English prototypes, commonly built with the second story extended slightly outward to overhang the wall below." She notes that "the subtype was relatively rare until the 1930s, when stylized, side-gabled examples (called Garrison Colonial houses) became very popular. These persisted into the 1950s." She adds that "Unlike their early prototypes, these typically have masonry-veneered first stories with wooden wall claddings above" and "Georgian or Federal-inspired doorways ...commonly mixed with "decorative pendants."¹⁰ She illustrates four examples of Garrison Colonials--from Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dallas, Texas, and Mission Hills, Kansas¹¹.

Although the house at 33 S. Sheridan Road is a typical example of a Garrison Colonial with high integrity, it does not display distinctive architectural character. The text of the revised nomination for the *Lake Forest Historic District* states that "Substantial, quality architecture, well within the canon of accepted historical revival styles, dominates the District".¹² A high percentage of houses, 128, are Colonial Revival¹³. The house at 33 is one of them, but it is difficult to consider the house "substantial, quality architecture". There are few artistically-

¹⁰ Virginia Savage McAlester. *A field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014. P 410.

¹¹ *Ibid.* P. 426.

¹² *Deerpath Hill Estates Historic District*. P. 12.

¹³ *Ibid.* P. 4.

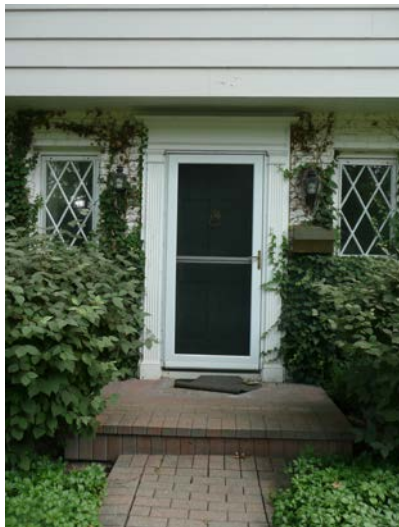
conceived stylistic features and the quality of materials is, in many areas, compromised in the name of economy.

Physical Description

The main block of the house at 33 S. Sheridan Road is rectangular with a second floor overhanging the first by about a foot. The house is topped by a shallow gable roof. There are gable returns at the end of each gable, suggesting a partial pediment. The first floor is brick veneer and the second consists of wide clapboards. Ivy surrounds most of the house, leaving pock marks in the masonry and the wood. The windows are predominantly 6/6 double hungs. There are wood shutters on the front of the house. The shutters on the first and second floor of the west end of the south gable end, which is visible from the street, are plastic. None of the shutters have latches, so they don't look as if they work. There are no shutters on any of the windows that aren't visible from the street. The two car garage is connected to the main block of the house by an inset hyphen that contains a family room. The hyphen and garage are set back behind the front plane of the main block. The house has two brick chimneys. One is at the ridge cap of the main block of the house. It services the living room fireplace. The second is at the ridge cap of the hyphen and services the family room fireplace. All the brick is painted white.

West (Front) Facade

The front facade of the main block of the house is symmetrical. It is three bays wide. On the first floor, the enter entrance is flanked by two windows with muntins in a diamond pattern. At each end is a 6/6 double hung window with wood shutters. The second floor consists of three 6/6 wood windows. There is a shallow overhang. The overhanging second story has an ornamental pendant at each end.



The center entrance is derived from Colonial architecture, though very simply designed. It consists of a paneled door flanked by slender fluted pilasters that support woodwork with no ornamental trim that suggests an entablature.

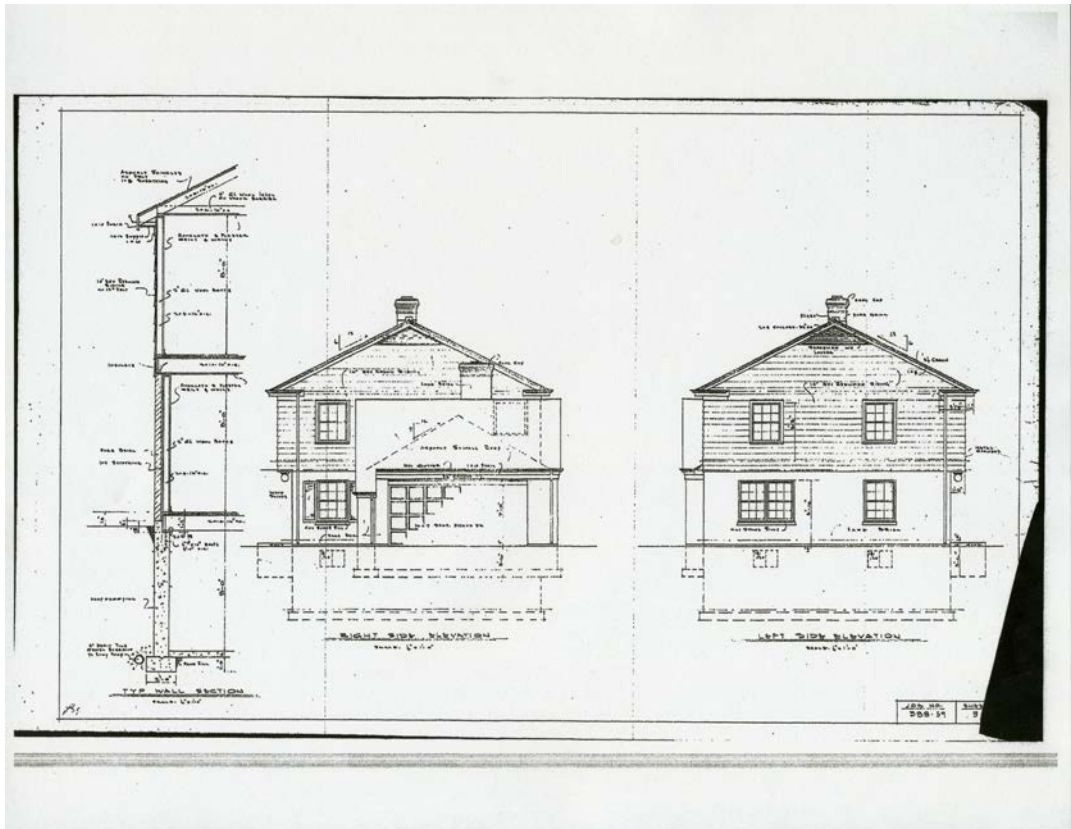
The hyphen has an entrance door to the family room that is paneled with 9 lites. To the north there are two 6/6 windows. In front of the wall is a shallow paneled entrance porch with a concrete floor. Slender square posts, with two shallow arched openings support a shallow gable roof. There is a five-paneled door to the garage in its north wall, opening onto the porch.



The garage is on the south end of the house. It has a gable roof with a return on each end. The gable has slotted louvers in the peak of the gable and a pair of windows with wood muntins in a diamond pattern. These windows are larger than those flanking the front entrance. Shutters flanking the pair of window, bear no relation to the windows and look false and not operable. The south roofline is longer than the north gable roofline.

South Facade





The south facade of the garage contains a paneled double garage door. To the west is a wide brick wall, with an blind alcove. The main block of the house is visible beyond the garage and there is a path to the entrance to the hyphan on the west side of the garage. One of the two 6/6 windows and the gable return may be seen from the south, north of the garage. It has plastic shutters. The window at the east end of the facade, only visible from the rear, has no shutters.

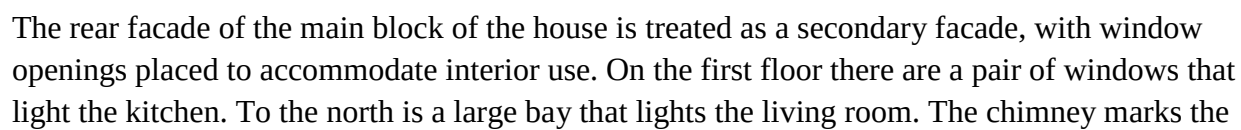




North Facade

The north facade is barely visible from the front of the house. Because of this, none of the windows, which are 6/6 double hungs, have shutters. There are louvers in the gable and gable returns.





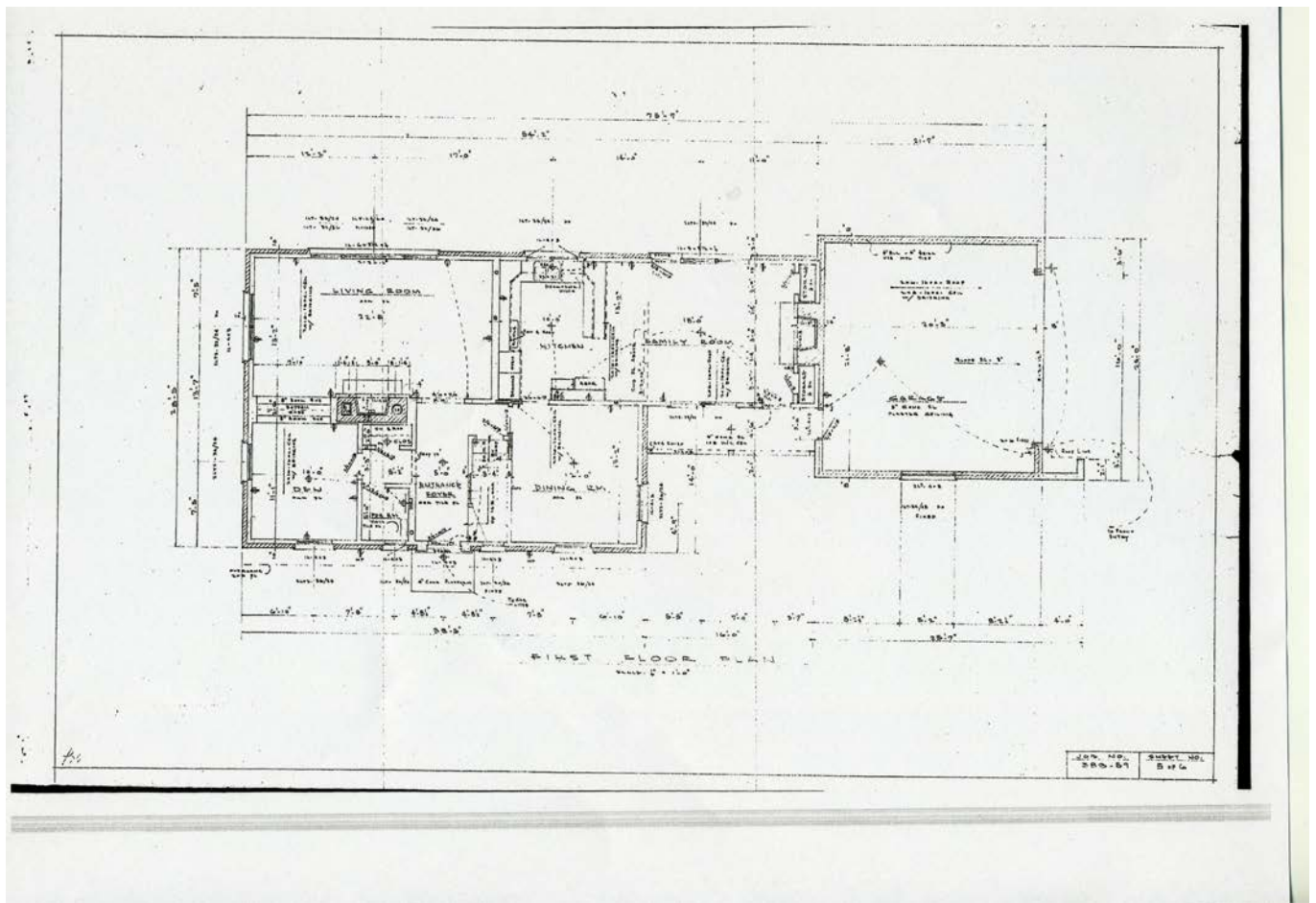
location of the living room fireplace, in the west wall. The upstairs windows open into the bedrooms.

To the south is the hyphen, which has sliding doors that open, down two steps, onto a stone patio.



First Floor Plan

The main block of the house is 28' x 76'. The first floor has 5 rooms and a powder room. All open off the front entrance foyer. To the east is the living room, the largest room in the house. It is in the northeast corner of the house. South of the hall is the dining room, which opens to the east into the kitchen. A den is accessed via a small hallway flanked by a closet and powder room; it is in the northwest corner of the house. Immediately south of the kitchen is the family room, located in the hypnen. The garage is immediately south of the hypnen and its porch.



Interior

The interior of the house, with the exception of a handful of architecturally interesting features, has nothing in the way of artistic detailing or fine materials. The family living areas are on the first floor and bedrooms, with two baths, are located in the corners of the second floor. Below grade is a carpeted recreation room with a fireplace and closets. There is oak strip flooring. Walls are drywall and there are hollow-core paneled doors with brass hardware.

Entrance Foyer

The entrance foyer is the home's most architecturally significant space. Entrance through a six-panel door immediately accesses a winding staircase with a gracefully curving rail that terminates on the tread of the fourth step. The space has simple crown molding and baseboards.



Living Room

Entrance into the living room is through an uncased opening. The large living room has crown molding and baseboards matching those in the entrance foyer. Its main feature is the fireplace, which has a surround consisting of simple boards with a shoulder lintel. Above the surround is an entablature with a molded cornice and dentils. Its general form is Colonial, and it is simple but handsome, if not particularly distinguished. The fireplace is not centered in the room as would generally be the case in a fine Colonial Revival house. Immediately next to it are bookshelves with cabinets below. It is a strictly utilitarian feature. There is a bay window overlooking the yard.



Dining Room

The dining room is located on the south side of the entrance foyer. It is small, with corner cabinets inspired in shape by Colonial cabinetry but flat, with no ornamental trim.



Passageway to Den

The den is located, through a small hallway from the entrance foyer. It is a small space, with sliding door closets on one side and a powder room on the other.



Powder Room

The powder room is small, with a window opening toward the front of the house.



Den

The Den is a small paneled room with shelving and paneled cabinets along the east wall. It has no distinguishing features.



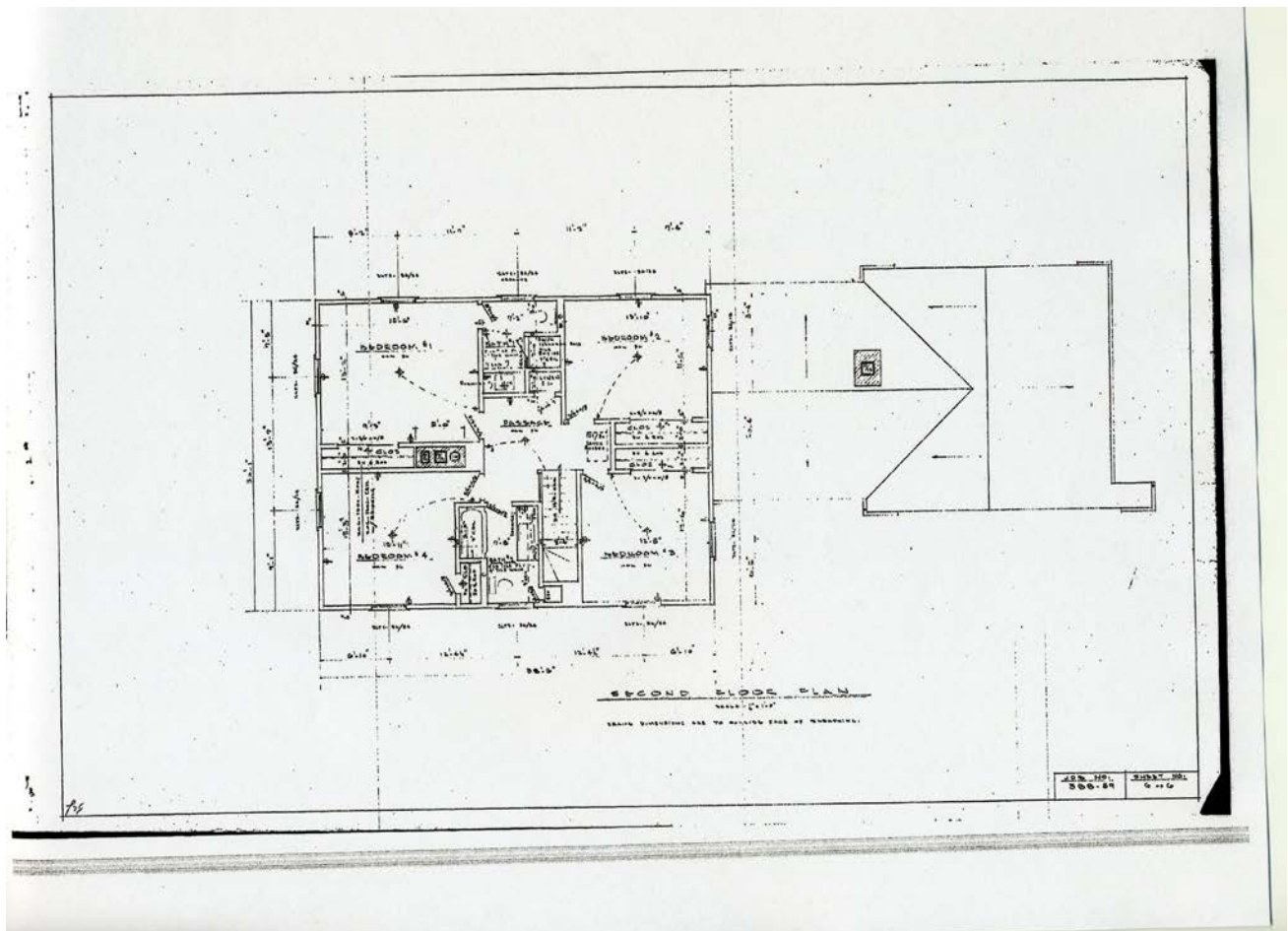
Kitchen/Family Room

The kitchen is accessed from an entrance on the east wall of the entrance foyer. It opens into the family room through a large entryway and cabinets with a counter beneath them. The family room, located in the hyphen, is paneled like the den and the interior of the front porch. There is a raised fireplace flanked by shelves and cabinets on the south wall.



Second Floor

The second floor has four bedrooms and two bathrooms. The four bedrooms and one bathroom all open from the central stairhall. The master bedroom, located in the northeast corner of the house over the living room, is slightly larger than the others. It has a bathroom opening off it.



The staircase opens into a central stair hall.



Bedrooms.

The bedrooms are simple rectangular rooms with simple basemold, thin casings around the doorways and no crown molding. Closets typically have bifold doors. The southwest corner bedroom is wallpapered. The others are all painted.



Master Bedroom and bath

The master bedroom, in the northeast corner of the house, is painted. A bathroom is located off this bedroom.



Hall Bath

The hall bath has had some remodeling



Basement

The basement is access from a stairway in the entrance foyer. It has a "rec" room that is carpeted and has no distinguishing features although there is a fireplace opening in the common brick chimney along the west wall.



Integrity

The house is virtually unaltered. It was a speculation house, with almost no high-design features. The materials are typical, not unusual or at all exceptional.

Construction is simple and basic; trim, where it exists, is standard. It reflects the work of a builder, with little design ingenuity. Still the design is intact, with only minimal changes, which reflect decorating taste.

Conclusion

Although the house is a period piece, unaltered and reflective of a 1950s builder house, it is not unusual. There is another built by Knute Larson that is its mirror image at 309 King Muir Road. In addition, the house has little artistic value. On the exterior, there were cost-cutting measures including plastic shutters on the side (where there are wood on the front) and no shutters on windows that are not visible from the street. It is a typical example of a Garrison Colonial, with an overhanging second floor, but one with few decorative refinements. The pendants are not artful, for example.

On the interior there is one particularly artful feature--the graceful staircase. The living room fireplace--inspired by Colonial architecture--is handsome, but utilitarian bookshelves adjacent to it detract from its importance in the room. The dining room corner bookshelves are a feature often found in Colonial Revival style dining rooms, but these are flat, with no artistic refinements. There are cost-cutting measures that detract from the architecture on the interior: bookshelves with off-the-shelf brackets, bifold doors, entrances without casings and rooms without crown molding. Characteristics typically found in handsome Colonial Revival houses are missing. There are no fine materials. The artistry is generally lacking.

Because the house does not have the artistic merit of other Colonial Revival houses, it would not be detrimental to the significance of the Lake Forest Historic District if the building was replaced. It was judged "Contributing" when the district form was revised--because of its park-like setting, its traditional style and its

general massing and materials, but it is not an important contributing building. Some are stronger examples than others--those with higher style detailing and more elegant examples of an architectural style. It is, rather, a "background" building that doesn't detract from the district but also does not make a strong contribution to the district's significance. Because of this, it would not be detrimental to the public interest of Lake Forest should the building be demolished. The character of the district would be retained, especially if the building is replaced by one with artfully-designed detailing, sensitive to the building's parklike setting.

Plans have been drawn up by the present owner, and a new home will be built immediately. It will be one compatible with nearby contributing houses in the district in style, materials and scale and will comply with the Standards for review of new construction within the Historic District.

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Plat of Survey, R. E. Decker, P. C. June, 2015.