Inman Park Tour of Homes

honoring Members of the 1981 Georgia General Assembly

February 10, 1981

Our History

The people of Inman Park welcome you to their neighborhood, one of the nation's first garden suburbs.

Inman Park was developed in the 1880s by Joel Hurt, a civil engineer who envisioned a suburban neighborhood with a country feeling that was also convenient to downtown Atlanta. He built the city's first electric streetcar system to provide Inman Park residents easy access to the city, then two miles away. Gracious Victorian mansions rose in the new community, at the center of which Hurt set aside ten acres for Springvale Park, whose grounds were landscaped with exotic trees and shrubs, many never before grown in Atlanta.

By 1898, most of the work had been completed, and citizens found Hurt's concept attractive. Inman Park became the home of Atlanta's most affluent and influential families until 1910, when lot restrictions lapsed, allowing construction of apartment buildings and smaller houses. Many elite homeowners fled to a newly developed nearby suburb, Druid Hills. In 1954, Inman Park was rezoned under a new city ordinance which allowed industrial, commercial and boarding-house uses on the properties. Throughout the '50s and '60s, Inman Park languished as a blighted area, its parks neglected, its streets strewn with junk cars and its handsome homes divided into slum apartments.

But to the astute observer, the slum dwellings were still architectural gems. Restoration on one house began in 1968 and others followed in rapid succession. In 1970, Inman Park Restoration, Inc., was born.

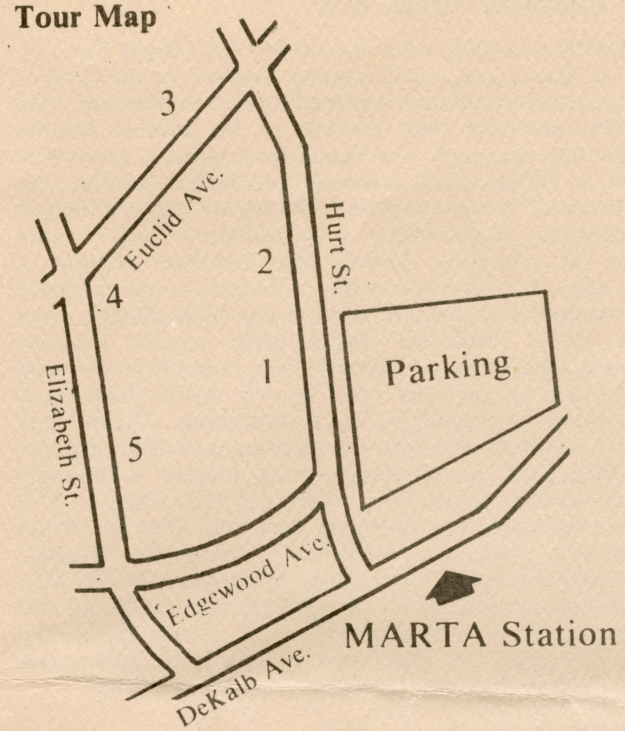
Today, Inman Park Restoration is more than a decade old and can claim a list of solid accomplishments: blanket rezoning of the neighborhood from commercial and industrial uses back to residential, listing on the National Register of Historic Places, wide-ranging beautification projects, and a popular spring festival and tour (this spring marking its tenth year). With IPR active in all aspects of civic affairs, a sense of community has returned to Inman Park.

But the job is not yet finished. Inman Park still faces the challenge of a variety of urban problems. Probably the greatest among these problems is the threat of a six-lane highway through the heart of the community. Having toiled for more than ten years on this issue, the community is confident that the scars of destruction can soon be replaced by housing and public uses consistent with the character of Inman Park and the other neighborhoods surrounding the area now called The Great Park.

1. 146 Hurt Street, N.E.

The lure of Inman Park reaches as far as Washington, D.C., where Ruth and Wayne Wall were living in a Victorian house when they first heard of Inman Park's revival..And here they are! Three years ago, the Walls moved to this Queen Anne Victorian on the street that Joel Hurt named for himself. Unlike most of its neighbors, the house has always been a single-family dwelling. From 1890 to 1981, it has had only four owners, one said to have been a former mayor whose daughter was married inside. The Walls' predecessors had done a considerable amount of work on the second floor, which had been shut off during *their* predecessors' forty-year residence. Wayne and Ruth have focused on the interior and the downstairs, having paint applied, woodwork stripped, floors refinished and kitchen totally renovated (and enlarged with the removal of a pantry). The Walls also replaced two missing rays to restore the sunburst fretwork in the entry hall.

Tour Map



2. 162 Hurt Street, N.E.

Known to generations of neighbors as "the Castle," this turreted brick house is Inman Park's only example of Richardson Romanesque architecture. Diana Glad and Ellery McClintock are its third owners since the rebirth of the neighborhood. Before that, it was owned for forty years by a woman who divided it into four apartments to finance her son's medical education. During the conversion, she stored the original lighting fixtures in the attic, then forgot they were there. (She even forgot there was an attic, say Diana and Ellery.) The fixtures had already been restored by the time Ellery and Diana purchased the Castle in 1977. They describe the work they've done since as "invisible changes," such as storm windows, gutters and a new furnace. The previous restorers had already tackled most of the big jobs, like the kitchen, which now includes what was once a back porch. On display are pottery by local artists and paintings by Diana's sister. Each square of the quilt in the entrance hall depicts an aspect of the current owners' lives and interests, both before and after their marriage.

3. 944 Euclid Avenue, N.E.

Delphia Lamberson is into her second Inman Park renovation. She moved to this home in January 1980 with son Sherwin from a smaller house in the neighborhood (too small, they found). This 1898 two-story house is hardly old to Delphia, who grew up in the oldest house in southern Michigan and spent much of her childhood in her grandmother's house, built on land granted by John Quincy Adams. Delphia attacked the black-on-black bathroom first, stripping away the black wallpaper and stripping off the black paint (the black tiles and fixtures, as well as the mirrored ceiling, however, will have to stay for the time being, she says). All mantels in the house are original, as are the interesting tiles around the dining room fireplace. Although little is known of the early history of the house, its recent history is colorful, she relates: one previous owner built a secret passage from his bedroom to the basement apartment that was occupied by a "lady-friend," as the Victorians would have put it.

4. 145 Elizabeth Street, N.E.

Callan Castle was designed and built for Asa Griggs Candler, founder of The Coca-Cola Company. Named for the family's ancestral castle in Ireland, it was the Candlers' home from 1903 until 1916—and was their favorite of the several Atlanta mansions they occupied. The Beaux-Arts home is grand and dramatic, as befits one of Atlanta's most fabled families. The first and second floors comprise 6,000 square feet and include five bedrooms, three baths, a conservatory and a room expressly for arranging flowers. The basement contains a bowling alley, a walk-in vault and a laundry room equipped with an ironing machine and a wood-and-brick clothes dryer (vintage 1903). There are double-brick interior firewalls throughout, steel-beam-reinforced floors, a steel-tile roof and panelled crawl spaces (each with its own raised-panel door) between floors to provide access to plumbing. Of the many decorative windows, the most outstanding is the eight-by-ten-foot stained- and painted-glass window located in the main staircase; it is believed to be a portrait of Mrs. Candler. This house was one of the first in Inman Park built after the advent of electricity, and the architect, George E. Murphy, incorporated into the coffered ceiling of the fourteen-by-forty-foot receiving hall sockets for sixty electric light bulbs, an idea that seems contemporary almost eighty years later. Susan and Michael Reynolds, who purchased the house about five years ago, are dedicated to the restoration of Callan Castle.

5. 127 Elizabeth Street, N.E.

This is both the oldest house in Inman Park and the newest. It was built in 1881, yet Jon and Kerry Austin have been in the neighborhood longer than their house. This may sound like a pair of paradoxes, but not so. The Austins had this house moved here from the Mechanicsville community (near the Stadium) in June 1979. It was split along the central hallway and trucked to Inman Park in two trips. Vandals made off with the mantels and the front door, but the beaded wainscoting, a walk-in china closet, decorative plaster brackets, heart-of-pine floors and plaster ceiling medallions survive. The Austins have uncovered enough of the stencilled friezes in the dining room and formal parlor to reproduce the stencils and restore the details. The roof members are original, as are the foundation bricks—all four thousand of them, which Kerry carted here in eight loads in a borrowed pickup truck. The original floor plan included only one bedroom plus a dressing room, a double parlor and a dining room (separated from the kitchen by both a butler's pantry and a food storage pantry). The Austins are adding bedrooms and bathrooms in the lofty attic for children Lane and Parker.

This tour is being conducted by members of the Atlanta Preservation Center's executive committee.