



St. Mark / St. Raymond Churches Neighborhood Tour

Tour begins at 210 S. Main Street and then meanders through the St. Mark Lutheran Church / St. Raymond de Penafort Catholic Church neighborhood



1. 210 S. Main Street

Mount Prospect was still just a whistle stop for the railroad when this farmhouse-style home was built in 1923 by **William and Gertrude Eichler**.

The family had a view out their front door of the red brick Station Master's house and Kruse's Tavern (now *Mrs. P and Me*), both of which were over on Emerson Street. They could even watch the mail taken off a post by the conductor with a large hook as the train sped through the small village of Mount Prospect, with a population of about 400 people.



2. St. Mark Lutheran Church 200 S. Wille Street

St. Mark Lutheran Church began as the Mount Prospect Evangelical Lutheran Church back in

1945 when five families were approached by Chicago pastors and asked to begin a mission church here.

On June 21, 1946 the charter for the church was signed by 36 members. Soon afterward, the location at Pine and Evergreen Streets was chosen for the first white concrete block church. By 1954 it needed to be enlarged and that was also when the name of the church was changed to St. Mark. It has undergone many expansions and renovations over the years.



3. 210 S. Wille Street

This home belonged to **Arthur and Anna Pahnke** who raised their three daughters here after moving to Mount Prospect in 1923. They even transformed the home

into a two-flat during the Depression, taking in boarders to pay the mortgage. Arthur was a tailor for Hart Schaffner & Marx.

4. 307 S. Wille St.

This elegant English cottage was built by **Helger and Ruth Carlson** in 1931. Ruth was an important and influential woman in Mount Prospect. In fact, she was president of the Mount Prospect's Woman's Club when it decided to develop a library in town.

The Woman's Club started the Mount Prospect Public Library during The Depression with a single book rack kept in the white Central School. When a tax-supported library was approved by referendum in the early 1940s, Ruth was elected one of its charter directors. But the library was not her only contribution to Mount Prospect. She was also involved with the war effort, the Historical Society and many other organizations.

5. 314 S. Wille Street

Georgia Gewecke, a spinster, according to County records, purchased this brick bungalow for \$2,500 in 1927. It was payable in five years at six percent interest, bringing Gewecke into The Depression years. During that time, it appears that she lost or sold the house to William Busse Jr. who owned it until 1942, apparently renting it out and never living here himself.



6. 223 S. Pine Street

This lovely old Cape Cod-style home was built in 1948 by a prominent local builder named Robert J. Bluett, shortly after World War II. This part

of Pine Street was paved (right over a stream!) and the lots subdivided in the 1920s, but the homes weren't constructed until after The Depression and World War II. But when the GIs came home in the late 1940s, this was one of the areas which boomed to meet the demand for housing. **Anthony J. Caliento** was the buyer.



7. 217 S. Pine Street

This Colonial home was built in 1954 and **Walter and Georgianna Stepanek** were the first residents. A birth announcement from 1959 tells the

heartwarming story of their son's birth. It seems that Walter was off on a north woods fishing trip when Baby Mark decided to make an early appearance. Georgianna's trip to the hospital was managed by three close neighbors and their 17-month-old daughter was tucked in and told about her new baby brother by another neighbor. This newspaper clipping from 1959 wrapped up the happy story: "If the attention presently being accorded Mark is any indication of his future popularity in the friendly neighborhood on South Pine Street where he will grow up, he is off to a good start. The Stepaneks' gratitude is extended to their friendly and helpful neighbors in a happy crisis."

8. 123 S. Pine St.

This home was built in 1952 by volunteers from the Mount Prospect Evangelical Lutheran Church, now known as **St. Mark Lutheran Church**. The land was purchased from a widow who had owned it since the mid-1920s but had never built a home. The congregation already had a parsonage, but felt they needed a second one for their assistant pastor. So, seven volunteers from the congregation stepped forward to build the home.

When the home was completed in early 1953, it was not yet needed as a **secondary parsonage**, so it was used as a parish house until 1957. For those three years the house was used for Sunday School classes, meetings and other gatherings because at the time, the only other public structure the congregation owned was the small concrete block church.



9. 207 S. Elmhurst Avenue

The original owners of this Tudor home, a very popular style in the 1920s and 30s, were **Alfred and Cecilia Larsen**. Alfred

Larsen was treasurer of the Lions Club and an active member of the community. The home was built in 1933 and its footprint has remained the same with a few interior modifications and updating.

If you are wondering why Elmhurst Avenue is a wide boulevard street with a grassy area in the middle, that was most likely a result of the 1922 petition to close the railroad crossing at Elmhurst Road and open a crossing at Main

Street causing Route 83 to curve away from Elmhurst Road. Varied speculation seems to agree that the adjustment was made to benefit businesses in downtown Mount Prospect. And, Elmhurst Avenue, which was planned as a main thoroughfare, became a residential neighborhood with an extra wide street in which to construct a grassy median. Original residents recall the elm trees which lined the block along both sides and in the center, creating a cathedral effect- keeping the block shady and cool even on the hottest summer days.



10. 205 S. Elmhurst Avenue

This brick Georgian home was built in 1939, toward the end of the lean times as the United States and Mount Prospect became

involved in the war effort. The original owners, **John and Bertha Walsh**, came from out east (New York and Pennsylvania) and lived on the north side of Chicago before moving to Mount Prospect. John worked for Peters Shoe Co. based in St Louis, a division of International Shoe Co. once the largest footwear manufacturer in the country.

11. 311 S. Elmhurst Avenue

This home was originally a brick ranch with an English attic, built in 1940 by H. Roy Berry and sold to **Ennes and Mildred Nichols**. It had two bedrooms and one bathroom and later had a family room added off of the back.

John Karlovitz, a subsequent owner, transformed it into the elegant Tudor home with turret that you see today.



12. St. Raymond de Penafort Catholic Church

This is the second church built by Mount Prospect's first Catholic

congregation, founded in the late 1940s. Built in 1961, it replaced an earlier and much smaller church which had been built at the north end of this same block in 1951. Before this church was built, things had gotten so crowded on Sundays that extra services were held down the street at Lincoln Junior High School.

While the church was under construction, the heavily-wooded parcel directly south and across Lincoln Avenue became embroiled in a controversy. A real estate consortium planned to build an apartment building there with an alley behind it and the neighbors protested loudly. The St. Raymond's pastor stepped in and offered to buy it for a parking lot and the rest is history.

13. 318 S. I-Oka Avenue

Rudolph Peterson finished this lovely English Country-style Tudor home shortly after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and the United States was plunged into World War II. It may be assumed that the Petersons were finally beginning to feel comfortable that the Great Depression was truly over, so they took the plunge and decided to build a house, only to have the country go to war. The Petersons were known for their beautiful yard and gardens.



14. St. Raymond Rectory 309-313 S. I-Oka Avenue

The three homes which were combined in 1964 to make a home for the

St. Raymond priests and pastor were built as separate private homes. Families lived in them for the first dozen or so years that St. Raymond Church existed.

The owners of the northernmost home, the Steinmillers, raised eight children there. Nell Steinmiller remembered fondly living next door to the nuns in the parish convent just to the north. The Steinmillers were offered the priests' home about three homes north of Milburn and I-Oka in trade. The arrangement was necessary because at the time there was a moratorium against building new rectories anywhere in the Archdiocese.

15. 204 S. I-Oka Ave.

This lovely Arts and Crafts style home is nothing like the tiny home that **George and Lottie Halverson** purchased from local builder, Robert J. Bluett, in 1949. The Halversons purchased a small Cape Cod home which most likely featured an unfinished second floor.

James and Debbie McGough purchased the home in 1992 and eight years later they embarked on a massive redesign and reconstruction of the house, turning it into the Arts and Crafts-style home you see today.

16. 116 S. I-Oka Ave.

This vernacular Cape Cod home was also built by Bluett. It was one of the first built as part of the post-World War II housing boom in Mount Prospect. **Thomas Starr** and his family were part of that influx of people.

This home is considered to be a vernacular Cape Cod because the exterior was enhanced with elements of several different architectural styles. That, combined with the fact that much of the house is built of brick instead of wood, means that this is not, and never has been, a pure Cape Cod home.

17. 220 S. Hi-Lusi Avenue

This lovely cedar-sided Colonial was built in 1940 and the original owners were **Barbara and Kermit LeMay**. According to a long-time neighbor, there were many empty lots in the area at that time. There was only one house across the street in the early 1940s and behind them were mostly cornfields. The lovely tall trees on Hi-Lusi in those days made an archway.



18. 600 W. Lincoln Ave.

This large and stately Tudor home was originally a rental! Times were not good when this home was completed and thanks

to the Great Depression, few people were in a position to purchase a home of any size, let alone this size. So, once it was completed, the builder rented the home to **James and Alice Boyland**. They lived here as renters in 1936 and 1937, finally purchasing it in 1938 and living here until 1954.

At the time, this was the only block around that was complete. One of the Meier farms came right up to the houses on the west side of the street and Mr. Meier rented space on his land for small Victory Gardens during World War II. Meier grew tomatoes and other vegetables which he sold to the Campbell's Soup Company.

19. 315 S. Wa-Pella Avenue

The Tudor houses on this block, with their darkened half-timbered beams against a white stuccoed or plastered background and high-peaked roofs, represent the most concentrated collection of this style of architecture in Mount Prospect. At the time of their construction, there were virtually no homes to the east of this street until you hit Wille Street. These represented the exclusive "country homes" area of Mount Prospect.

This particular home was built in 1934 for **John and Margaret Martin**. Notice the pointed arch front door, a detail often associated with Gothic architecture. Touches of Gothic were often applied to Tudor-style buildings. One noted architecture critic called these revival-style homes "Tudorbethan" because they were a mix of the Tudor, Elizabethan and Jacobean styles.

20. 314 S. Wa-Pella Ave.

This home was one of the 18 Tudor homes built on the block in the 1930s. This lot, without the house, changed hands many times from 1929 until the home was built and apparently given to **William Kuehner** in early 1934.

This 300 block of Wa-Pella reportedly had so many children that people around town gave it the nickname “Incubator Alley” in the 1930s. It continued to live up to that label in the 1950s and beyond.



21. 313 S. Wa-Pella Ave.

This lovely Tudor was also built in 1934. The area was then known as “Prospect Park” and was heralded as “the birth of the greatest

single realty suburban development in the history of Chicago,” in the *Cook County Herald* on May 8, 1925.

Unfortunately, Lonnquist was able to redefine Mount Prospect, but he was not able to make a lot of money on the endeavor. Due to the timing of his investment, he did not sell much of his land before the stock market crash of 1929 and the depression that followed. However, during the time he owned the land, he was able to plot the streets, build the Northwest Hills Country Club and golf course and a few demonstration homes.

After Lonnquist lost the golf course and clubhouse, it was purchased by a man named **Harold Willson**, the first owner of this home, along with his wife, Stella. Willson changed the name of the country club to the more familiar Mount Prospect Country Club and made it a semi-private club with annual dues of \$60. Willson held on to the club until 1950 when he sold it.

22. 306 S. Wa-Pella Ave.

This home was built in 1932 -- one of the first on the block. It is distinctive for its massive chimney on the front of the house. In fact, it is this feature, combined with the mixture of brick and stucco which makes this home a Tudor instead

of a Cape Cod. Unlike many of the houses on this block, it does not feature the steeply pitched roofs and half-timbering which usually mark Tudor homes.

Nothing is known about **August and Amelia Wendel**, the original owners of this home except that they lived here until shortly after the end of the World War II, selling it in late 1947. At the time the Wendels lived here, this was the lone developed block, surrounded by farm fields.

23. 200 S. Wa-Pella Ave.

This Cape Cod home was built in 1950 as part of the post-World War II housing boom. In 1940 the village’s population was only 1,720 but by 1950 when this house was built, it had grown to 4,009. **Ed Ruzicka** and his family were part of that influx of people, but they only stayed for 12 years before selling it. This home is a vernacular Cape Cod because the original exterior was brick instead of wood, like with a pure Cape Cod home.



24. 121 S. Wa-Pella Ave.

There is some question as to when this home was built since records indicate that the lot was sold in 1926; no mortgage was

recorded until 1942; and the house can be seen in a 1938 aerial photo. Additionally, during renovations a newspaper dated November 1937 and a document called a “Voluntary Trade Agreement,” dated 1936, were found in the walls. The trade agreement stated that the home was being constructed by union workers and was probably posted to avoid any damage to the home or any attempt to stop work on the house.

This house may have been originally inhabited by **Arthur and Anna Janetsky**, or they may have had it built as an investment and then rented it until the economy improved. We are not sure. But it was sold to another couple in 1942.

Paul and Lisa Snead did a major renovation of the home in 2003/2004, adding the front porch and an upstairs window, making today’s house more of a farmhouse than the Cape Cod it was originally.

Red dots are homes on the tour

