

Agenda
O'Fallon Historic Preservation Commission

O'Fallon Museum / Downtown O'Fallon Meeting Room
101 West State Street

Tuesday, October 6, 2015, at 6:30 p.m.

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of prior meeting minutes
 - a. June 2, 2015
 - b. September 1, 2015
3. Public Hearings
 - a. Establishment of a Landmark Designation for building located at 101 Dartmouth. The petitioners are Ronald and Krista Robbs.
4. Discussion
 - a. Possible 2015 Designations
 - i. St. Ellen Mine/Park
 - b. Bank Clock Commemorative Plaque
5. Work Session
 - a. Bus Tour
6. Adjournment

Next Meeting: Next meeting November 3, 2015, @ 6:30 p.m. - O'Fallon Museum / Downtown O'Fallon Meeting Room; 101 West State Street

General Citizen Comments: The City of O'Fallon welcomes comments from our citizens. The Illinois Open Meetings Act provides an opportunity for citizens to speak at all committee and Board meetings. However, 5 ILCS 120/1 mandates that NO action shall be taken on matters not listed on the agenda. Please submit your name to the chairman and limit your comments so that anyone present has the opportunity to speak.

DRAFT MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
O'Fallon Museum/Downtown O'Fallon Meeting Room
101 West State Street
Tuesday, June 2, 2015 @ 6:30pm

1. **Roll Call:** Julie Spengler, Mark Kampen, Steve Brown, Brian Keller, Susan Hertich, Robert Jordan;
absent: Jim Sabella, Jim Krahulec
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Motion to approve minutes by Spengler, seconded by Hertich, All Ayes
3. **Public Hearing:**
 - a. None
4. **Discussion:**
 - a. Possible 2015 Designations:
 - i. Smiley Home: Robert is working on the National Significance write-up. Reviewed text relating to "Changes to Homes Over the Years". Plan is to review application in August and hold public hearing in September.
 - ii. St. Ellen Mine/Park: Continue to hold until Smiley Home application is completed.
 - iii. Bank Clock Commemorative Plaque: Found source, working on layout
5. **Work Session:**
 - a. Bus Tour:

Narratives are being written for 3 portrayals: Tim is writing Tom Gordon, Doug is writing Carriel and Allen. City will prepare press release for September. Justin will find out when registration will open.
6. **Adjournment:** Jordan, Kampen, All ayes

Next Meeting:
O'Fallon Museum, Downtown O'Fallon Meeting Room
101 West State Street
6:30pm, August 4, 2015

Minutes Taken By:
Julie Spengler

DRAFT MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
O'Fallon Museum/Downtown O'Fallon Meeting Room
101 West State Street
Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2015 @ 6:30 p.m.

1. Roll Call: Randall excused, all others present
 - a. Visitor: Alderman Herb Roach.
2. Approval of prior meeting minutes
 - a. June meeting's minutes was deferred to the Oct. 6, 2015 meeting.
 - b. August meeting minutes – motion to approve by Kampen, seconded by Keller, all ayes – minutes approved.
3. Public Hearings: None.
4. Discussion:
 - a. Upcoming Designations
 - i. Smiley Home (101 Dartmouth) – Homeowners signed historic designation form. Commission decided the criteria used to qualify as historic. Package is ready to request public hearing. Keller will add photograph of house.
 - ii. St. Ellen Mine/Park – Discussed difficult life of a coalminer. Slowly putting together narrative from each contributor.
 - b. Bank clock commemorative plaque: Still debating size, material, and location. We'll make a mock-up for next meeting so we can put on the wall and perhaps photograph for city staff to see.
 - c. 109 Betty Lane house (designated historic 2006) has been sold to owners who are interested in keeping the exterior intact.
 - d. Election of Officers: All current officers, who had been nominated at previous meeting to retain their positions, were unanimously voted to serve in those positions in next term.
 - e. It was noted that at 2:00 p.m., Sept. 27, 2015 at the Shiloh Valley Cemetery, a dedication will be made to memorialize Joseph Ogle by the Sons of the American Revolution and Daughters of the American Revolution.
5. Work Session: Bus tour in October: All narratives have been assigned to writers. Final actor position is filled. Program will be edited to thank the writers and actors.
6. Adjournment: Motion made by Hertich, seconded by Spengler – all ayes.

Next meeting: 6:30 p.m., Oct. 6, 2015 in the Downtown O'Fallon Meeting Room of the O'Fallon Museum – 101 W. State St.

Smiley Home
101 Dartmouth

LD 2015-01

Year built 1958?

RECEIVED SEP 08 2015

BUILDING
DEPARTMENT
ORIGINAL



APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK
(Please print)

I. Applicant

A. Applicant's Name Ronald and Krista Robbs

B. Mailing Address 101 Dartmouth Drive, O'Fallon

C. Telephone Number 618.628.2195

D. Please check (✓) under which capacity you are filing: ?

☒ 1. The recorded owner of the property, as of 12-16-2005 (date)

☐ 2. Other. (Explain fully) _____

Signature Krista Robbs Date 8-13-15

II. Property Information

A. Street address of property being considered: 101 Dartmouth Dr.

(as representative of Southview Gardens development) ?

B. Legal description and parcel ID # of property. Applicant to provide deed to property. (attach supplementary sheet if necessary.) LOT 27 OF SOUTHVIEW

GARDENS - 04-32.0-118-001

C. Present Use. family residence

III. Applicable Landmark Criteria

1. ✓ 2. 3. ✓ 4. 5. ✓ 6. 7. 8. ✓

The following criteria as set forth in Section 151.31 of Ordinance 3043 of the City of O'Fallon will be considered in designating an area, place, building, structure or other object as an O'Fallon Landmark:

1. Its significance or value as part of the historical, cultural, artistic, social, ethnic, political, or other heritage of the community, state or nation;
2. Its location as a site of a significant local, county, state or national event;
3. Its identification with a person who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state or nation;
4. Its identification as the work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the community;
5. Its embodiment of elements of design, detailing, materials or craftsmanship that renders it architecturally significant or innovative;
6. Its archaeological significance to the community, county, state or nation by virtue of information yielded or is likely to yield important to history or prehistory;
7. Its character as a particularly fine or unique example of utilitarian structure including, but not limited to, farmhouses, buildings or other commercial structures with a high level of integrity or architectural significance;
8. Its representation of a sense of time and place unique to the City.

IV. Landmark Request

- A. Describe present and historic physical appearance. (Attach supplementary sheet.)
- B. State significance of property and justify criteria selection. (Attach supplementary sheet.)
- C. Plat. Two copies of a plat of the lot or area shall be filed with the application.
- D. Names of neighboring property owners: (For district nominations only.) If the application is for a landmark district, the application must be accompanied by a list of the names and addresses of the owners of record lying within the district.
- E. Photo. Include a photo of the proposed landmark.
- F. Note: The O'Fallon Historic Preservation Commission meets on the first Tuesday of each month. Applications for designation must be filed with the Commission at least 30 days prior to the date of said meeting.

History

The newly platted subdivision of Southview Gardens was annexed into the City of O'Fallon on September 16, 1957. It consisted of 83 acres with lots laid out for an initial 29 homes with the promise of 90 total. The development, previously farmland, was owned by George Schwarz, president of O'Fallon Quality Dairy, who purchased it from the estate of Ernest Smiley, a founder and first president of the First National Bank of O'Fallon. The developer was Pinckneyville, Illinois native and former Pinckneyville Ford car dealer Charles Ritchey Smiley (1920-1997). Smiley decided to go from cars to home building in O'Fallon in 1956 and became franchised as a National Homes dealer. Before turning to Southview, he built 25 houses on Joy Drive. While not born in O'Fallon, Smiley had deep O'Fallon roots. His father, Leslie, was an O'Fallon native and a nephew of Ernest Smiley, the previous owner of the Southview land. His grandfather, Charles Smiley, built the California mission style house, unusual for O'Fallon, at 503 N. Lincoln Ave. in 1910 and co-founded the Smiley Brothers Phone Exchange with his brother Ernest. Counted among the local pioneer families, the Smileys settled in the O'Fallon area prior to O'Fallon's founding.

Southview Gardens came at a time when O'Fallon was beginning to feel growth due in large part to its proximity to Scott Air Force Base. In 1950 O'Fallon's population was 3022 but by 1960 it had swelled to 4705. The new subdivision was positioned to take advantage of military personnel looking to live off base in neighboring O'Fallon. Just weeks before the subdivision was annexed, a plea went out from the base expressing the urgent need for more housing, particularly for officers associated with the incoming Military Air Transport Service.

On January 9, 1958 an 8-page "Special National Homes Section" appeared in the O'Fallon Progress touting Southview Gardens and the National Homes being built there. That weekend all were invited to view the newly built display home at 101 Dartmouth Dr. The development and its affordable housing stock was considered a major event with Mayor Henry A. Schwarz even providing a welcoming message in the paper. The advertisement was clearly aimed at Air Force personnel. It was no surprise, then, that the display home would soon be occupied by USAF families especially in the early years.

Along with the subdivision came a flurry of activity elsewhere in the city. The sanitary sewer system was being upgraded and outhouses were banned. In the fall of 1958 a new high school was opened at Smiley and Route 50 and the following summer ground was broken for Southview Plaza. 1959 saw the founding of Bank of O'Fallon and the opening of Memorial Pool in Community Park. But the following May also brought the closing of St. Ellen mine ending over a century of coal mining in O'Fallon. By then, however, O'Fallon had already started on the road which would lead it to ever increasing growth which has characterized it for over half a century.

Architecture

Our designated "Smiley Home" Sunwood exhibits many characteristics of a Minimal Traditional style home built in vast numbers from the 1940's on. They commonly dominate large tract housing developments that sprung up nationwide in response to a people recovering from the Great Depression, World War II, & facing a huge housing shortage.

1950's homebuyers were traditional about their tastes in homes. They wanted to have modern features but distrusted modern design as faddish. The designer of our home, Emil A Schmidlin, states that Americans' interest is centered on "the little white house", the lines of which are ageless & always popular. Crossing the threshold is like returning once again to one of the most charming & gracious periods in our nation's history.

Some dismiss these simple, practical, functional, no nonsense, plain vanilla homes as "non style" quickly constructed of inexpensive materials. In fact Modern Traditional was a pacesetter style using rapidly evolving building methods & materials.

Modern Traditional style is recognized as a small one-story with minimum decoration & low pitched, often side-gabled roof, minimal eaves and roof overhang, exteriors of wood, brick, or mix, and parallel orientation to the street with large picture windows marking placement of the living room.

The interior of the Sunwood was designed incorporating recommendations from the 1956 Woman's Congress on Housing. Convenient traffic flow between kitchen & bedrooms without going through the living room lessens the housewife's cleaning chores and keeps the living room ready to receive visitors at all times.

Several models of National Homes were constructed in O'Fallon. The variety of models led to a diverse mix among the blocks of the original subdivision. Over time, additional alterations have been made. Aluminum lap and board-and-batten siding have been replaced with vinyl siding. Windows and doors have been replaced with more efficient insulated versions. Front porches of varied configurations have been added. Back porches have been expanded and some enclosed to create living space. Several of the attached one-car garages have been converted to living space as well.

National Significance

The idea of a low cost, well-designed, and high quality home has a long history in the United States. Some trace this back to packaged building materials imported in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by European colonists. Many historians credit Sears, Roebuck & Co. for bringing pre-fabricated homes to the forefront. After World War II, companies offering a relatively complete package of components to builders began to provide low cost housing to fulfill the need driven by shortages of the Great Depression and WWII, when hundreds of thousands of soldiers returned and wanted homes of their own.

Of great importance in this drive for affordable housing were initiatives by the government to aid military veterans. Conceived in 1944, the home loan guaranty program began with the goal to relieve the economic and sociological problems of post war readjustments of millions of men and women then serving in the Armed Forces. This program has since morphed into what is now known as a VA Loan.

Mass-producing a relatively complete home in a factory is generally traced to the formation of the Sportsmen's Trailer Company, later re-named Schult Homes in Elkhart, Indiana in 1934. Their first products were relatively small structures on wheels aimed at fishermen, hunters, and campers. It quickly became clear that there was also a market for trailers that would function as permanent housing. While a few competing manufacturing firms were founded before WWII, the real growth erupted afterwards, often in northern Indiana by alumni of Schult.

Prefabricated housing consists of components built in an off-site factory and assembled on the site of the house. Prefabrication made construction relatively quick, once a foundation was laid, a house could be erected in two-to-five weeks. Located in New York, the best-known pre-fabricated home community is most probably Levittown. Similar communities were built in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Puerto Rico. Levittown gets its name from its builder, the firm of Levitt & Sons, founded by Abraham Levitt on August 2, 1929, which built the district as a planned community between 1947 and 1951. Levittown was the first truly mass-produced suburb and is widely regarded as the archetype for postwar suburbs throughout the country.

In O'Fallon, Illinois Charles Smiley used the National Homes Corporation to develop what became the community known as Southview Gardens. National Homes Corporation began in 1940 and was headquartered in Lafayette, Indiana. National Homes built prefabricated and modular houses, apartments, mobile classroom units, and mobile homes. It also offered financing and insurance to its buyers. In a keen marketing move, Charles Smiley openly advocated using FHA and VA Loan programs for the purchase of his homes. At the same time there was a drive by Scott Air Force Base for local communities to assist with affordable housing.

As promising as all of this may have been, it should be noted that fair housing laws were not enacted until 1968. Racial covenants and racial steering were often used to restrict home buying in certain areas. Racial covenants are contractual agreements among property owners that prohibit the purchase, lease, or occupation of their premises by a particular group of people, usually African Americans. Additionally, racial steering – the practice of discouraging persons of a particular race to buy or not buy real estate in particular areas – was used to segregate the races. Policies of racial covenants and racial steering were an unfortunate, yet direct, reflection of the views of many in society during this period of history in which planned communities such as Levittown and others were created. Indeed, clause 25 of the standard lease for the first Levitt houses, which included an option to buy, stated that the home could not "be used or occupied by any person other than members of the Caucasian race." Similarly, Saint Clair County had racial covenants during this time as well. It is not yet established as whether or not Southview Gardens used racial covenants to select, or restrict, tenants. Both are illegal under the 1968 Federal Fair Housing Law, as well as under the Illinois Real Estate Brokers and Salesmen License Act.

And so, history shows us the complexities of economics, society, and innovation is not always unblemished as seen through the lens of time. Still, through modern technology, support from government programs, and entrepreneurship, post World War II affordable housing was made available to a great many Americans.

Building Methods

The local developer, in our case C. Ritchie Smiley, was responsible for the installation of streets and utilities. Local carpenters would prepare a concrete slab, with plumbing and electrical lines stubbed-up. The house materials would arrive at the building site on a tractor-trailer. The walls were pre-made, using 2X3 joists faced with 1/2" drywall, the biggest panels measuring 8' by 12'. Pull wires were already located inside the walls so that wiring could be installed. Outside walls came with an aluminum siding made to look like traditional board-and-batten. Roof trusses were erected and paneled and shingled. Everything down to the roofing nails came shipped on the trailer. A team of six carpenters did all the work, and could erect a house in a single day.

Owners were encouraged to contribute "sweat equity" to the job; Smiley would supply paint and owners could use the equivalent of their work contribution as part of the down-payment on the house.

Appendix

"Living in Smiley Homes" by Michael Schroeder (OTHS, '63)

My father was in the Air Force, and, in the summer of 1959, he was transferred from Burtonwood AFB in NE England to Scott AFB. Upon arriving back in the States, we went to visit my grandparents in Wisconsin while our parents located housing near Scott.

We were probably fairly typical of military families at the time, and had moved several times, always renting houses or apartments because we knew that each place was temporary. Imagine our surprise when our parents announced that they had bought a house in a new development in O'Fallon, Illinois, not far from St. Louis. We had lived in Germany, Texas, Washington, D.C., and two places in England. Our "home base" in the United States was at our grandparents' house in Wisconsin.

O'Fallon was a small, rural town, serving the surrounding farming community. The times were very different than they are now, as was the town. Going out to eat in a restaurant was considered something of an extravagance, and was certainly a rare occurrence. That O'Fallon really did not have restaurants (other than the Dog'n'Suds) was not unusual.

We moved into the Smiley Homes development and went about the business of getting to know the neighbors, getting ready for the coming school year (I was entering high

school), and finding our way around. The houses being built were all pre-fabricated, which was something of a novelty.

Our house, like most, was a ranch with 3 bedrooms, one bathroom, a living room/dining room combination, and a kitchen. A one-car, attached garage was considered a great luxury. Imagine being able to unload groceries without having to brave the elements. The only weather to suffer was the heat, and, in those days, air conditioning was rare. Neither cars nor houses had it (nor, we learned, did schools).

The houses were built on slabs, so there were no basements, and storage was, by today's standards, minimal. My parents' room was the largest, and my two sisters shared the next largest room. I had the smallest bedroom, but it seemed great to me.

Most of the neighbors were also military families, and, as such, were more connected to each other than to the rest of the community. We shared a history of being "migrant workers", with many moves and with fathers who were sometimes gone for periods of time ranging from weeks to months. We had to learn to adjust quickly, to meet others, and to get on with life. I can only think of a few families that were not military, the Merkel's, the Bellina's, and the owner of the haberdashery in the strip mall, Vince. The rest of us were people whose only local connections were each other.

The neighborhood was not unlike many to come later. Both the houses and the people were new. I think that this was something that began after WWII with the GI Bill, but blossomed in towns like O'Fallon where there was a large military presence. At school, we assimilated into the community to some degree, but we always had a little bit of "apartness". We joined in school activities, participated in sports, drama, debate, and other extra-curricular activities. Some kids joined scouting organizations, delivered newspapers, etc.. We made friends in school and our parents often made friends with the parents of our friends.

High school students walked to school, but buses came for grade school kids. My sisters were in in grade school, so they took the bus to school. I don't remember what happened with people who attended junior high school, or whether that was just a part of the grade school.

There were not many part-time jobs at which one was employed, but we mowed lawns, washed cars, raked leaves, baby-sat, and found other ways to make some spending money.

The large community park in O'Fallon had a really nice swimming pool, a real oasis in the hot, humid summers without air conditioning. Many of us, however, went out to the pool at Scott. We relied on O'Fallon, though, for dances above the police station and walks through the park with friends. We were exuberant youth, and the O'Fallon made room for us and accepted us.

I lived in Smiley Homes, O'Fallon, for the entire time I was in high school – four years – longer than I had ever lived in one place in my life until then. Upon graduation, I went to Wisconsin to work in a Green Giant cannery before starting college. My parents moved to Germany. There was no internet. Phone calls had to be “long distance” and were expensive. Letters were the only real way of staying in touch, and I lost touch for many years.

I have been back to O'Fallon several times in the past few years for reunions. I always make a point of driving through Smiley Homes and looking at the houses where I and my friends lived. That transient neighborhood holds many memories and provided a foundation for me when I was a boy trying to learn how to be a man. I see that the willow tree that my dad and I planted has been replaced by an oak. When did that happen, and why? All of the trees are now mature, and so, I hope, am I.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to the owners of our representative home, Krista and Ronald Robbs, for their cooperation in the nomination process, and more importantly for the care with which they have maintained and preserved the house at 101 Dartmouth, the very first of the Smiley Homes.