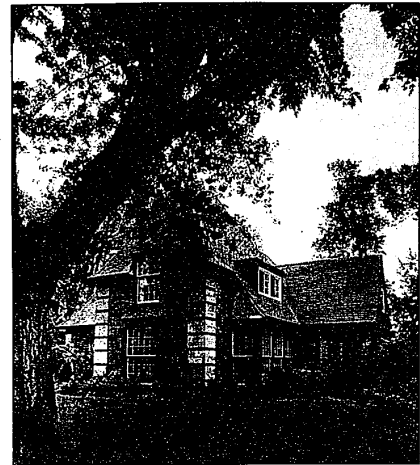


Long search ends happily



A heavy growth of ivy had completely covered the beautiful exterior detailing of this home designed by Wallace Frost.

Architect's name sold the house

Story: CORINNE ABATT
Photos: DICK KELLEY

Would you buy a house purely because it was designed by a particular architect? Many people would probably say no — price, location, size, style and condition would all have priority.

But those who search for and find Wallace Frost houses are a different breed. There's a magic about the architect who designed houses in the metropolitan area in the late '20s and early '30s that has a lure that equals great paintings, diamonds or Oriental treasures.

Finding a Frost home isn't easy; most sell before they ever go on the market. Leslie Brooks of Birmingham was aware of that when she and her husband, Bruce, used to talk about Frost in reverent tones. In her search, Mrs. Brooks took the most direct route. She identified the Frost homes in the Birmingham area in which she wanted to live and further refined her list to the ones she figured she and her husband could afford. Then she contacted the owners directly although none of the homes were for sale.

"I would stop by and leave my name on the back of a recipe card," she said. "My friends used to tease me saying I was getting a reputation as that crazy lady who was always putting messages on the back of a card that said 'from the kitchen of.'"

But she never had any luck contacting the people who lived at 244 Wimbledon although this happened to be a Frost home she and her husband particularly admired from the outside.

SHE DID LEAVE a card with another Frost home owner, John Richardson, and when he heard that 244 Wimbledon might be sold, he called the Brookses. She said Richardson understood her quest, he had gone through a similar hunt himself. When he was transferred to this area from California, he told his family the only solace for leaving the Pacific Coast sunshine would be to live in a Wallace Frost home.

Leslie and Bruce Brooks made an appointment to see the home on Wimbledon, stepped into the foyer, took one quick look at the living room and bought the house. They moved in last December.

No second thoughts — and no regrets.

"I saw that bay window in the living room and I knew my grand piano belonged there," Mrs. Brooks said. "Every morning when we get up we find something else to enjoy — it's like living in a dream."

All of the elements that characterize Frost homes of that period when he was taking his inspiration from European architecture — particularly French Norman — are present in the Brookses' home — fine woods, natural materials, many levels, imported hardware — the best of everything, plus charm.

All the dormers are insulated. The attic is plastered, all floors are hardwood. In the living room, all the natural wood beams around the fireplace are faced with copper.

One pleasing touch is that all of the brass hardware was imported from (Continued on page 5A)



One look at the living room, and Leslie and Bruce Brooks were ready to mortgage their future. After 50 years, there still were no cracks in the plaster, and the floors were in perfect condition.



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Solid brass door knocker imported from England is typical of all the fine hardware found in the Brooks home.