



Wednesday, October 01, 2008

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# Broker says northwest Tulsa is hot investment area



By Susan Hylton Assistant Editor
11/25/1998
Last Modified: 3/6/2008 5:06 AM

The foursquare home is a common style in the historic Brady Heights neighborhood and here on North Denver Avenue. The house, occupied by Margaret Aycock and her family, is one of many homes in the area that have undergone extensive renovation.

Community World staff photo by Susan Hylton

The bungalows and foursquares that dot the tree-lined streets in Brady Heights have had more than 60 years to settle into themselves. Now, for the first time since 1930, a new home is going up in the neighborhood.

It was in January of this year that the Brady Heights Neighborhood Association initially took on the task of attracting private development.

The Association later hosted a housing summit to help promote its goals. Invited were people from city government, developers, real estate agents and bankers. The Tulsa Development Authority, which owns several empty lots in the neighborhood, agreed to sell a lot to the BHNA for \$4,000.

BHNA President Tim Lovell said the TDA has never done anything like this before with a neighborhood association.

The TDA deferred half of the cost of the lot until the home sells, and the Bank of Oklahoma is paying BHNA to buy the materials and do the landscaping itself. Several banks agreed on a construction loan for the builder, Thomas Construction of Tulsa, Lovell said.

Boundaries for Brady Heights are the inner-dispersal loop to the south, the Osage Expressway to the west, Marshall Street on the north and the alley between Cheyenne and Main Street to the east.

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Drive through the area and you'll see examples of the builders' foursquare, a two-story home with four bedrooms, large rooms, a pillared front porch and attached carport, and the craftsman-style bungalow, which features roof gables, bay windows, a large front porch and two or three bedrooms.

Most of the homes in Brady Heights were built between 1904 and 1925. The BHNA stipulated that new homes built there blend in with the style of other homes in the historic neighborhood.

From Indian Territory days to the 1920s, the neighborhood was considered a fashionable place to live, attracting oil money and the likes of G.Y. Vandever, I.S. Mincks and "Diamond Joe" Wilson.

The new home will be built in the prairie style and will sell for \$132,000 when complete. It will be a two-story home with three bedrooms and fireplaces. It will feature hardwood floors, crown molding, a formal dining and breakfast room. It will have a detached, oversize garage in the back and a breezeway leading into the house.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held Nov. 1 on the empty lot at 1174 N. Denver Ave., where the home will be built. Attending was Teresa O'Rourke, a broker with Keller Williams Realty who has a listing on the property and is also on the board of the Northd prostitution in the '80s.

Four years ago, O'Rourke said she was one of the few brokers interested in listing homes in Brady Heights.

"I really believe in the area and I've taken a lot of flack for it too," she said. "They're not supposed to do this, but a lot of agents do steer you away from north because they just automatically assume you don't want to be north."

O'Rourke says she tries to educate her clients about stereotypical perceptions of the neighborhood by encouraging them to drive around the area and see for themselves. She plans on moving to Brady Heights in the near future, and says northwest Tulsa is the hottest investment area going hand in hand with the revitalization of downtown.

The TDA is also selling the other lots it owns in Brady Heights for \$4,000.

"I don't think you could buy a city lot for less than \$20,000," O'Rourke said.

First-time home buyers and people who appreciate the quality of older homes but can't afford Mapleridge are often the type of client O'Rourke sells to.

"It's a quality you can't duplicate today," O'Rourke said. "Those homes are priceless. More and more people are buying because they recognize the unspoiled architecture, the phenomenal architecture."

O'Rourke first sold homes between \$15,000 and \$25,000 to investors who refurbished the houses and resold them for \$60,000 and \$70,000, she said. Although she says she is still selling to investors, the really good deals are harder to find because everybody is buying.

"Brady Heights was also the first neighborhood to be listed on the National Historic Registry," she said. "It's kind of a forgotten area that is slowly coming back into its own."

Lovell moved to Brady Heights in 1990, buying a foursquare home that was built in 1913 with craftsman features for \$12,000.

"The windows are particularly lovely," Lovell said. "This is our first home and I intend it to be our last."

Lovell said there were those who thought he was crazy for investing in North Tulsa. But, he said, residents report things have vastly improved in the neighborhood, with crime seeming to move elsewhere and an increase in homeowners and newly refurbished homes.

"Diversity is the key to Brady Heights, not just the people, but diverse houses," Lovell said. "When I think of suburbia, I think all the houses look the same, with anonymous faces you don't know. Here no house is the same, no person is the same and you get to know your neighbor."

Going through some hard times together was what actually made the neighbors close, Lovell

said.

Together they helped drive away the negative influences from their neighborhood, he said, and these days they say things are no worse than in other areas of Tulsa.

"The plusses of our neighborhood is that we watch out for each other," Lovell said.

Another reason to expect things will only get better in the areas surrounding their neighborhood are the Rogers University acquisition areas east of Brady Heights where crime seemed to move, Lovell said.

"We're hoping and expecting OSU-Tulsa to expand in that area," Lovell said. Currently, empty lots can be seen with the remains of walls and stairways where old homes were demolished.

The neighborhood is close to Gilcrease Museum, Rogers University and the Greenwood and Brady arts district. Two magnet schools are only blocks away, Emerson Elementary at 909 N. Boston Ave. and Carver Middle School, 624 E. Oklahoma Place.

Brady Heights is also home to the old Tate Brady mansion at 620 N. Denver Ave.

The neighborhood was named after the famous Tulsa politician, merchant and hotel owner, Tate Brady.

The area also includes the Zenia Loughton/Reuter house at 625 N. Cheyenne Ave., which is believed to be a Sears kit house and one of the oldest homes in the area.

Brady Heights was established at a time when there weren't restrictions on sizes and types of homes, O'Rourke said. There, and in the nearby Country Club Heights, it's not uncommon to see a three-story, brick mansion next door to a bungalow.

"That's the beauty of these older neighborhoods," she said. "There's something for everyone."

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