

ON THE MARKET

A stone's throw from downtown, this fully renovated Eastwood charmer was built in 1914

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BY SHELBY HODGE

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Editor's Note: Houston is loaded with must-have houses for sale in all shapes, sizes and price ranges. In this continuing series, CultureMap Editor-at-Large Shelby Hodge snoops through some of our faves and gives you the lowdown on what's hot on the market.

4629 Rusk

I gave myself 25 minutes to get from CultureMap offices on Wood Street just off of San Jacinto to my destination — Eastwood, which at the time looked rather distant on Mapquest. It took only 15 minutes, including the delay by the train and my getting lost.

Who knew that such a verdant, lovely neighborhood existed within 10 minutes of downtown? Obviously a growing number of young urban professionals, artists and those with a taste for the historic have begun discovering this quiet enclave just beyond the city's bustling EaDo corner. And the renovations have begun.

Established in 1913 by developer William A. Wilson, the same Wilson who designed and developed the appealing Woodland Heights neighborhood to the northwest of downtown, this sleepy (and we mean that as a compliment) suburb has maintained its character with a wealth of Arts and Crafts and Carpenter architecture. The charming homes are wrapped in a leafy blanket of venerable oaks and soaring pines that make for wonderful tree-shaded streets.

Today, the single-family notion is preserved by deed restrictions which are rigorously enforced. You won't see any four-story duplexes popping up here. Residents tout the area as an old-fashioned neighborhood where folks know one another and join in year-round community activities. Just check in with the active Eastwood Civic Association, which sponsors a home tour every October.

With all of this in mind, I was absolutely charmed by this particular Arts and Crafts home built in 1914 and completely renovated back to the studs with new plumbing, new roof, new electrical in 2005.

Walk through: Up the steps we go and cross the inviting wrap-around porch to the front door, through which we enter an open foyer that eases into the living room. True to the period, a fireplace flanked by bookcases, which are topped by small leaded glass windows, stands at one end.

The spacious dining room, which opens through French doors onto the porch in the front and the garden at the back, is located to the side and back of the house. An open flow plan leads to the stairwell, a half bath with washer/dryer closet and the updated kitchen. While appliances and cabinetry are new, the focus was on retaining a sense of the era in the redesign. A breakfast nook at the end of the kitchen looks out on the surprisingly large backyard.

The redo included a masterful addition of two full baths on the second floor where three cozy bedrooms all open to a central space adjoining the stairs. As one would expect from an early 20th century house, closet space is minimal but the master bedroom is large enough to accommodate a King-size bed with plenty of breathing room. The master opens to a roof terrace that offers views of the tree-shrouded neighborhood. Armoires and chests would be the answer to the closet situation. The current owners use one of the bedrooms as an office/TV room where they added built-in bookcases.

Heart-warming: With its whimsical interior room colors (turquoise living room), high ceilings, original pine floors restored to a solid beauty and the tasteful addition of old-style (love the footed tub) but completely functional baths make this house totally captivating.

Location, location, location: The house is situated just two blocks from the new METRO rail line, which will whisk commuters directly to downtown. No need for auto transport to the office. Once the rail line is completed, the neighborhood in transition is expected to take off with a mini-boom. Even before the rail starts rolling, it's only 10 minutes to downtown by car.

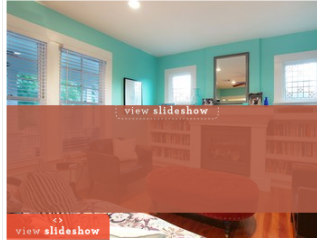
A track runs through it: Yes, the railroad runs behind the house but the lot is big enough (7,300 square feet), that the house is far removed from the tracks.

Bonus: The completely fenced yard, attractive wrought-iron in the front, is so large at the back as to easily accommodate a two-car garage, the one amenity that is absent in these older neighborhoods. The addition would also provide a buffer between the train and the house. The grounds are nicely landscaped in the front making for loads of curb appeal.

Square footage: 1,928

Asking price: \$279,000

Listing agent: Robert Searcy of Texas Real Estate & Co.



Courtesy of TKImages
Built in 1914, this cozy Arts and Crafts style home has loads of appeal in a neighborhood shrouded in venerable oaks and pines.



Courtesy of TKImages
The dining room is particularly spacious and opens to one leg of the wrap-around porch at the front and the garden at the back.



Courtesy of TKImages
Fully restored in 2005, the house features new plumbing, electrical, a new roof and a modern kitchen with traditional flourishes.