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Welcome to the 50th Anniversary Meridian-Kessler Home Tour!

The annual Meridian-Kessler Home Tour—a long-standing tradition that promotes the history, vibrancy, and the distinctive neighborhood we call Meridian-Kessler—is a favorite weekend for many who love old homes.

In June of 1973, a few forward-thinking community leaders organized the first MK Home Tour featuring seven homes and two gardens. They wanted to showcase the neighborhood's vast range of stunning architecture. Tickets were \$1.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the tour and we've added a few extras to honor this milestone. You'll see seven homes, everything from a 1915, five-bedroom Colonial to a 1927, three-bedroom Bungalow. You'll enjoy artwork by eight local artists—many who have direct connections to Meridian-Kessler. You'll feel the ambiance of a dining table styled by a local designer. And you'll hear instrumentals performed by the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra.

We're honoring the 50th anniversary by sharing some past and present details about each of the tour homes.

Please remember our generous sponsors—see page 8 for details—and thank them with your support in the community. Special thanks to our many volunteers as well.

A 50th anniversary is often called a golden anniversary. Enjoy the extra polish of this special year and celebrate the history and future of Meridian-Kessler.

Claire Dilts Panyard

2023 Meridian-Kessler Home Tour Chair

Reminders!

- Shoe covers will be provided and are required to enter homes.
- No photography, food or drink permitted inside homes.

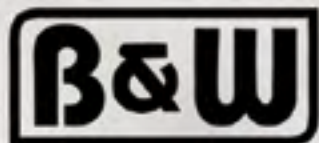
Photography — Jessica Bussell Borgo

Home Histories — Susan Reinhardt @athomeinamerica

Meridian-Kessler Home Tour Artists and Musicians

Enjoy art, design, and instrumentals in the 2023 tour homes by eight artists, one local designer, and the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra.

Mary Ann Davis	American Impressionist who lives in Meridian-Kessler madavisart.com
Thom Fairchild	En Plein Air artist who took up painting after retiring as surgeon facebook.com/thesurgeonpainter
Kim Greene	Oil painting artist who likes to spread beauty into everyday life kimgreeneart.com
Heather Hourigan	Watercolorist who specializes in homes and pets @hhwatercolor
Walter Knabe	Multi-disciplined artist who lives in Meridian-Kessler walterknabe.com
H. Ward Miles	Contemporary painter influenced by abstract expressionism hwardmiles.com
Megan Perry	Acrylics, watercolor and pastels painter who lives in Meridian-Kessler meganperryart.com
Shamira Wilson	Interdisciplinary muralist who grew up in Meridian-Kessler and has studio space in MK shamirawilson.com
Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra	Instrumentals at 4508 N Broadway Street by the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra. ICO offers ticket discounts and extras to MK Home Tour attendees icomusic.org
Megan Watson	Dining room table styling at 4508 N Broadway Street by Megan Watson with Julie O'Brien Design Group julieobriendesign.com



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Meridian-Kessler Home Tour Homes and Locations

Homes are listed in south to north order, but start at any address along the tour.

CELEBRATING **50** YEARS
1973 | 2023

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

October 7-8

THE STIPHER - CRAFTON HOME

123 E 44th Street

THE SPRING - RYAN HOME

4508 Broadway Street

THE FIEGE - BRIDGE HOME

4735 Washington Boulevard

THE REEVES - BUSSELL HOME

5246 N Central Avenue

THE PETRY - LEBLANC HOME

525 E 53rd Street

THE MERTZ - FARRELL HOME

5365 N Central Avenue

THE GRAY - PHEFFER HOME

5760 N Delaware Street

THE STIPHER – CRAFTON HOME

123 E 44th Street

Beginning in the 1890s, the American Craftsman style entered the architectural scene as a popular home design. The style is said to be a reaction to the ornate elements and complex rooflines of the Victorian and other Revival styles popular during the last half of the 19th century. Appreciated for its budget-friendliness and simple style, American Craftsman homes became popular throughout Indianapolis.

In particular, the block of East 44th Street between Pennsylvania and Washington Boulevard boasts a large collection of Craftsman-style homes. Built in 1916, the home at 123 E 44th Street was first home to Henry A. Stipher, a salesman for W.M. Herriott & Sons, a dental supply company. In 1924, the Stiphers sold to architect, Albert A. Honeywell whose knowledge and love of architecture made him the perfect steward for the American Craftsman home.

Michael and Katherine Crafton acquired the home in 2013. They had looked in other neighborhoods around town but knew the Arts and Crafts house on East 44th Street was theirs once they saw the gabled roof and the welcoming front porch.

In 2021, they decided to do a complete renovation and expanded the footprint to accommodate their growing family. The overhaul included an open, first-floor great room with fireplace. When the weather permits, the floor-to-ceiling doors make the owners feel like they have an indoor/outdoor room that overlooks a surprising pool on a deceptively deep lot.



WORTH KNOWING

4 Bedrooms
3 Bathrooms
15 Total number of rooms
223-foot Depth of lot

THE SPRING – RYAN HOME

4508 Broadway Street

If ever there were a house in Indianapolis that deserved the title “Party House,” it might be the large, stately Colonial Revival home located at 4508 Broadway Street. Built in 1915, the home remained vacant until Willard Salisbury Spring and his wife purchased what would become the setting for bridal showers, nuptial dinners and even a small wedding ceremony for their daughter, Helen.

Between 1925 and the 1930s, Edward and Elizabeth Hereth continued the party atmosphere in similar fashion, hosting similar wedding-related festivities. The World War II years changed the tone of the parties, when Walter and Helen Spalding hosted open houses to honor their son while he was home on leave from the war.



By 1966, Donald B. Keller's family celebrated the 25th anniversary of their annual “Christmas Sing” holiday party in the home.

Today's owners, Scott and Laura Ryan, were first outbid in 2021 by other buyers. But on the morning their third daughter was born, they got a call that the five-bedroom house was back on the market. A sign that the timeless, charming Colonial house was meant to be.

Don't miss the original windows, living room fireplace, and the claw foot tub in the third-floor bathroom. Recent updates include new backyard deck and fence, powder room and primary bathrooms.

The owners cherish their good fortune to get the house. And hope to host many more family celebrations on Broadway Street to keep the festive tradition alive.

WORTH KNOWING

- 5 Bedrooms
- 3 Floors of living space
- 1 Back staircase with hidden Murphy Door
- Bed Company ironing board
- 150 varieties of hostas planted by former owner

THE FIEGE – BRIDGE HOME

4735 Washington Boulevard

A 1936 headline in the Indianapolis Star read, “Manor House Near Public School 70 Has Ample Quarters for Large Family.” The brick manor house at 4735 Washington Boulevard, with its stone trim and leaded glass windows, was built by Charles C. Binkley, a local realtor and homebuilder. Ferdinand and Mary Fiege were the first to own the imposing home. An employee of G.C. Murphy, a chain of five-and-dime stores, Ferdinand found the home a great place to raise his family for nearly 30 years.

Donald Pritchard and his wife Margot purchased the property in the mid-1960s. Don was actively involved in the formation of the Meridian-Kessler Neighborhood Association. The Pritchards sold to attorneys John and Cathy Bridge in the 1980s. The home appeared in the movie “Going All the Way” with Ben Affleck, an adaptation of the 1970 novel written by Indianapolis native, Dan Wakefield.

Over the years, the Bridges have completed projects that enhance the original features of the home, while making it conducive to modern living. The classic Meridian-Kessler fortress feels like being transported back in time to a Tudor castle. The most-recent kitchen remodel was designed with the intention of blending with the authentic stately home. Although the fourth floor is not open to tour, the former maids’ quarters now work as a home office.



WORTH KNOWING

4 Bedrooms
4 Floors of Living Space
4 Bathrooms
45 Current owners' years at address

THE REEVES – BUSSELL HOME

5246 N Central Avenue

The gracious brick Tudor at 5246 N Central Avenue was built in 1927 just before the Great Depression. Robert E. Reeves, who was in the real estate business, and his wife, Maude, bought the home in 1928. The Reeves family weathered the grim days of the Depression and made the house their home for more than 30 years.

William and Grace Farley became the next owners in 1970, and gave the house a major \$10,000 facelift in preparation for its next sale to John J. Quinn, and accountant with Ernst and Ernst.

Years later, the three original second floor windows were extended artistically into the dormers and a center gable formed an impressive cathedral window look. A unique transformation as breathtaking on the interior as it is on the exterior.

Current owners Joshua and Danielle Bussell lived in Chicago when 5246 N Central Avenue appeared on the market in 2020—just in time for the pandemic to make it difficult to house hunt. With some reconnaissance help from MK family members, soon they were examining every room on a video walkthrough tour. They loved the enlarged divided-light windows. They loved the original, top-nailed hardwoods. They loved the detailed trim work and arched doorways. They needed to see it in person.

When they walked through the door and saw the sellers' array of Chicago-themed items, it felt like home.

In 2021, a declining garage had to go. Extra square footage allowed for office space, a mudroom with exposed brick from the original exterior, an eat-in kitchen, and a much-used family room. Danielle's favorite room, however, harkens back to the splendor of the original living room with its large windows, original fireplace, and intricate wood details. A spot for morning coffee or a glass of evening wine that makes the move to Meridian-Kessler feel right at home.



WORTH KNOWING

- 4 Bedrooms
- 4 Bathrooms
- 3 Years at address
- 2 Home offices added above new garage

THE PETRY – LEBLANC HOME

525 E 53rd Street

Some houses are perfect for large families. Some are perfectly suited for just one person. From the time the quaint cottage at 525 E 53rd Street was built in 1929 until the 1990s, it served as home to a series of single women—several widows and an independent business woman. The house was even built by a woman—Stella C. King, a contractor, whose slogan was “The Small Home at its Best.” A 1930 Home Builder’s Clinic section of the Indianapolis Star described King’s creation as “a shingled cottage of a type common to Cape Cod, combining New England simplicity with conveniences of modern design.”

A widow, Ruby Petry, was the first owner. Her daughter, Kathryn, inherited the house in 1938 and lived there until her retirement in 1967.

Kathryn’s successful career spanned from office manager for Bookwalter-Ball-Greathouse Publishing to auditor for WIRE Radio and the Metropolitan Parks Department. Several other widows followed until a young couple broke the streak in 1995.

In 2016, in keeping with the home’s unconventional history, Kelly Bennett LeBlanc signed the real estate papers when she was single. Soon, she convinced her architect father to embark on a full renovation—finish the basement, update the original bath, add two bathrooms, landscape the yard, build a new garage, renovate the kitchen. Her complete overhaul doubled the efficiency of the property, but preserved the original footprint. Before long a husband and a son filled up the up-to-the-minute cottage bungalow. Don’t miss the hideaway library off the front foyer. The perfect place to nestle in, read a good book and people watch while sipping morning coffee.



WORTH KNOWING

3 Bedrooms
3 Bathrooms
2016 Year entire home was renovated to the studs
12 Number of rooms after renovations

THE MERTZ – FARRELL HOME

5365 N Central Avenue

When the American Foursquare at 5365 N Central Avenue was built in 1916, it was not quite as substantial as it is now. In 1928, owner Dr. Henry O. Mertz filed a building permit for an addition. Two years later, a building permit for a second addition was filed. Those two add-ons made the house large enough for Dr. Mertz, his wife, Ida, and their children. A nurse before marriage, Ida was active with local society clubs and often hosted meetings at their Central Avenue home.

In 1936, Dr. Mertz was appointed head of the Urology Department at Indiana University School of Medicine. That same year, their daughter Jane was married in front of the living room fireplace. It seems medicine was a family affair for the Mertzes as both sons followed in their father's footsteps and became doctors.

A deep lot by Meridian-Kessler standards, current owners Bob and Carlee Farrell expanded the footprint again in 2021. They loved the sunny windows across the west niche of the living room, the beams in the living and dining rooms, and the four generous bedrooms on the second floor for their growing family.

Every room of the Foursquare has been renovated in two years. Be sure to note the French oak, wide-plank, hardwood flooring and floor-to-ceiling cabinetry in the expansive kitchen and family room area. And the sizable black-and-white tiled primary bath with shower-tub combo.

The Farrells grew up in Indianapolis but not in Meridian-Kessler. They wanted to raise their family in a centrally located neighborhood that was walkable. And wanted a home they could renovate to fit today's lifestyle. Next project on the improvement list? The lower level.



WORTH KNOWING

4 Bedrooms
5 Bathrooms
14 Total number
of rooms
170-foot Depth of lot

THE GRAY – PHEFFER HOME

5760 N Delaware Street

Not only was the storybook English Tudor built in 1927 stylish in its early days, but the home's first two owners had keen senses of style as well. Returning home from Hollywood, Florida, newlyweds Glenn and Delores Gray purchased their first home in the quiet block of Delaware Street. Glenn was a jeweler with Gray, Gribben & Gray, located at 151 N Illinois Street.

In 1931, the Grays sold to Marvin and Ruth Weisman. At one time, Marvin was in the motion picture promotion business. Ruth had style and a 'Hollywood' connection as well. In March 1933, she opened the Hollywood Dress Shop at 108 Monument Circle in the English Hotel building. The grand opening announcement for the shop, which Ruth managed, advertised that replicas of exclusive New York and Paris designs would be sold at the low price of \$2.88!

In 2020, when Michael Pheffer purchased the property, the home still gleamed with charming Tudor style, but he wanted to make it his own. A nearly two-year, to-the-studs renovation started not long after the purchase was complete. The remodel uncovered intriguing details of what the home might have been when built. Possibly a one-story, one-bedroom, one-bath in its earliest days.

Multiple additions and renovations later, the home now boasts 19 different rooms if including the foyer, the laundry room, and the bathroom in the garage. Don't miss the extreme attention to restore the aura of the original home—parquet floors, crown molding, stucco fireplace, limestone detailing. The owner's favorite of all those spaces? The lacquer red-painted study. A tribute to a grandmother who loved red, loved design, and loved style. Maybe a little tribute to the home's original style and Hollywood glow way back to 1927.



WORTH KNOWING

5 Bedrooms
6 Bathrooms
19 Rooms or enclaves
3864 Square feet of living space

Meridian-Kessler's Historic Timeline

Membership mattered
from the beginning.
And matters even
more today.
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1820	First residences in Meridian-Kessler constructed
1880	First platted neighborhood appears in Meridian-Kessler with a population of 2,500
1921	St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church founded on Central Avenue, the oldest Catholic Church in Indianapolis north of the Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral
1928	Joseph J. Bingham School #84 opens at 57th and Central Avenue
1933	The Old English Tavern—now The Red Key Tavern—opens at 5170 N College Avenue
1953	Indianapolis ceases operation of electric streetcar service, including the route along College Avenue
1960	Led by Rev. Gerald Johnson, residents begin meeting to discuss formation of a neighborhood group
1965	Meridian-Kessler Neighborhood Association founded
1973	Brenda Huston organizes the first Meridian-Kessler Home Tour
2002	Historic Atlas Supermarket closes at corner of College Avenue and 54th Street
2016	Comprehensive Meridian-Kessler Neighborhood Plan adopted by City of Indianapolis
2019	Indianapolis opens Bus Rapid Transit Red Line service through heart of Meridian-Kessler
2020	47th Annual MK Home Tour cancelled because of pandemic, MKNA hosts Stay-at-Home Tour
2023	MKNA continues to honor the history and to advocate for the future of Meridian-Kessler by celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Meridian-Kessler Home Tour



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Helping clients buy and sell homes in the Indianapolis area for more than 40 years, the Somerville Team—Libby Somerville, Kim Baxter, and Stevee Clifton—work together to showcase properties in creative and innovative ways incorporating trust, passion, and results with every client they represent.

We are proud to support the Meridian Kessler Neighborhood Association as they continue to promote the history and architecture, while simultaneously supporting the various programs and initiatives of the neighborhood.



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