A Look Back in Time

*The **Alford House, 6315 Third Avenue**, is a contributing structure in the Third Avenue Historic District, a National Register District, and was designated as a City historic structure by the Kenosha Common Council on September 19, 1994. In its own right, the property also meets Standards 1, 2, and 3 of Section 15.04 of the City's Zoning Ordinance pertaining to historic designation.*

This architecturally significant home was built by Milwaukee architect, Richard Phillip, for $350,000 between 1928-1930. It required the full-time services of two Milwaukee craftsmen, stonecutter Frank Stevens and carpenter John Debblink. This fine Tudor Revival house is a two and one-half story structure made of imported Belgian red brick with a heavy Vermont slate tile gable roof. The main rectangular block of the house has many projections, including a large projecting main entry pavilion. The entry pavilion is constructed of stone and is topped with battlements. The tudor-arched entrance is decorated with stone label molding and a tabbed stone surround. Above the entrance are two carved stone panels that were made on site, as were many of the rest of the carvings scattered throughout the home and above them is an oriel window trimmed in stone. Other openings on the building are of varied sizes, but largely consist of multi-paned casement windows decorated with label moldings and tabbed stone surrounds. At the northwest corner of the main block of the house is a two-story tower section, and over the north wing entrance is a stone-clad oriel window. Numerous large brick chimneys project from the roof of the building. The gutters are made of lead-coated copper. At the end of the north wing is a large garage wing, decorated with Tudor details. The Tudor Revival style was popular in the Roaring Twenties precisely because it projected timelessness and stability.

One of the most impressive parts of the home is the central hall, which is dominated by a huge stone staircase with hand-carved balustrade. The landing is lit by a large stained-glass window depicting scenes from the legends of King Arthur. The ceiling of the hall is hand-carved oak, with an acorn-and oak motif. Each of the doorways leading out of the hall is topped by a huge keystone, carved from a single block of Mankato stone. The oak paneling in the living room and dining room is among the finest in Wisconsin and the oak floors have ebony strips between the boards and ebony dowels anchoring them to the sub-flooring

underneath. Some people have cedar chests to protect their clothes, where Alford had Debblink build a walk-in cedar closet. The second floor hall is made of polished bricks, laid on end. Each of the seven fireplaces has a stone mantle hand-carved by Stevens.

Walter H. Alford was vice-president of the Nash Motor Company when he began construction on this house. The Nash Motor Company was Kenosha's largest industry in the twentieth century. He was a member of the first city council and largely through his efforts the 1925 city plan was commissioned that brought about the development of the civic center concept. Unfortunately, he died in 1929 before the house was fully completed, but his wife, Gertrude Alford, lived here until at least the 1940s. She was president of the Kenosha Development Company. Alford donated land north of the city for a park, and donated land for the construction of Our Lady of Holy Rosary Church.

In 1957, the house was purchased by the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. and was used as their headquarters for many years. It is appropriately called "Harmony Hall".

We encourage you to drive by and view the distinctive characteristics of this majestic mansion for yourself.