

Minneapolis Tribune

Leon Snyder / 12E

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Staff Photos by Regene Radniecki

The Carlson house, with its gray-stained lap cedar siding, was built with narrow side toward the street.

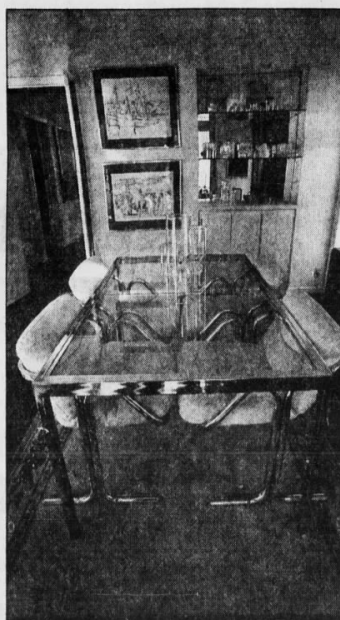
House built to look like an old-timer to blend into Kenwood district



Caroline and Bruce Carlson and children Hubbard and Molly Stout gathered around the lunch counter between the kitchen and family room.



Light from three sides and white walls enhance the spacious, open feeling in the living room.



The furniture stresses the contemporary look of the home's interior.

By Neal Gendler
Staff Writer

At first glance, Bruce and Caroline Carlson's spanking new Kenwood home hardly merits a second glance.

That's the whole idea.

Unlike some other Kenwood efforts of the last couple of decades, this house doesn't jump out and shout that it's new. Quite the opposite: In mass, scale and exterior materials, it's intended to slip unobtrusively into the neighborhood.

"Our principal objective was to try to make the house blend in," said Bruce, a developer who said he applies that philosophy for a living. "We were aware that some of our neighbors were sensitive to our taking out what amounted to green, open space and putting a structure there."

The structure is tall, two stories, clad in narrow-board, lap cedar siding with a salt-gray, penetrating wood stain. It's long and narrow, with its short dimension facing the street. Those who bother to look twice should see at once that it's new; the double garage under the house, with access from the alley, may be the most obvious clue.

Inside, the evidence is quiet but overwhelming. Walls are white, windows are high, lines are clean and furniture is of the modular and chrome-and-glass persuasions. Still, there are touches reminiscent of the past, like hardwood flooring and fireplaces—three of them, all energy-efficient.

Altogether, the Carlsons have just what they wanted: a home they designed to suit them that they also feel suits Kenwood.

"Both of us had lived in that neighborhood for about 10 years—all around, for about half a block in each direction—and the kids had grown up there," Caroline said. "It was a neighborhood we knew about and liked, it's close to downtown and feels like home—it is home."

The Carlsons had been married to others in their years in the neighborhood. After they married three years ago, they lived in a duplex, then moved to Greenway Gables, a portion of the Loring redevelopment area Bruce helped create.

"We liked it fine," Caroline said. "It's a great place for adults, but the kids needed too much transportation," more room "and there weren't kids for our kids to play with."

"We knew we wanted to be in Kenwood," she said, "but it's very hard to find a lot—almost impossible." She said they didn't want to buy for several reasons: "We wanted something energy-efficient, suited to our life style—simple—and Bruce has wanted to build a house since he was a kid."

They found a house with an extra lot for sale last spring, not far from Lake of the Isles Blvd. It was a big, stucco-coated house on a corner of 22nd St. They bought it with an eye toward that extra lot.

"We bought the house with the idea we'd either live in the house or sell it and build a house," she said. "We didn't know which direction we were going to go... it's a wonderful house, wonderfully built," but at something like 3,000 square feet, too big.

"I guess that the ultimate decision not to live there was probably that we liked the idea of building a house precisely the way we'd like it," Bruce said. "That's a rare opportunity. Any older house you buy usually requires customizing, redecorating or whatever, and this way we could design it to fit."

"When we had that house for sale, we had a scale drawing of exactly what we were going to do so potential buyers would understand," Caroline said. She thinks a number of people were bothered by the plans. For one thing, the extra lot had "nice big pine trees on it and they had to be removed; a lot of people didn't want the house if they couldn't have the lot."

The house sold and they began building next door in mid August.

"We wanted this house to make a small footprint," she said. "The lot isn't that large, and we wanted

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