

Artist restores fire-damaged home in a blaze of color, creativity

Bungalow earns Heritage Foundation recognition

BY EMMA JACKSON
News Staff Reporter

Artist Pam Hamblin wasn't afraid to experiment with colors on the inside of her 1917 bungalow home, but on the outside she let the white covering prevail. Until August of 2002, when an arsonist torched her house.

Hamblin was sleeping when the arsonist ignited the yard waste she had placed in recycle bags on her front porch, stored there because rain had been forecast. She escaped through her back door but the house received extensive smoke damage. It would be almost two years before the restoration was complete.

The incident does have a silver lining; she made changes to the home that she might

109 North St.

- **Owner:** Pam Hamblin, since 1988.
- **Year built:** 1917.
- **Architectural style:** Bungalow or craftsman.
- **Square footage:** 1,200.
- **Cost of exterior work:** About \$25,000.
- **Interesting tidbit:** Hamblin said there have been four owners of the home, all single women.

have resisted. "After the fire I had the porch restored back to its original look," Hamblin said. She received input from a previous owner's son who had photos of the way the home once looked. "I've been able to do everything I've wanted to do to the house," she said.

That includes the bold orange and purple exterior paint work, separated by a buttery cream trim. The eye-catching home has garnered Hamblin a 2005 Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation marker. Jane Schmiedeke, a member of the foundation, encouraged Hamblin to think outside the box when selecting a new coat of paint.

"Pam was inclined to repaint the house white along with another color and I told her, 'Pam if you're going to spend good money at least make a change,'" said Schmiedeke, who loaned Hamblin books on historic paint colors. "Pam found combinations of strong colors and it's very handsome. I'm so glad it turned out the way it did."

Hamblin said before a brush was dipped in a bucket she sought input from her neighbors who would have to look at the results. Most were supportive,



ROBERT CHASE, THE ANN ARBOR NEWS
Pam Hamblin, outside her North Street home in Ypsilanti, received an Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation award for the renovation she completed after a 2002 fire. The house was built in 1917.

HOUSE FROM 1

Neighbors consulted about colors

others apprehensive, but most have been won over with the finished product. "That's interesting" was a response she heard more than once, but the tables have turned.

"Now people really like the color," Hamblin said. "It used to be people only liked the garden."

The garden is still appealing, taking up more space in the yard than grass. Since she bought the home more than a dozen years ago, she's slowly turned over the sod and created a cottage garden with poppies, peonies and globe thistle making spring bloom appearances.

Hamblin said when she was living and working in Ann Arbor and was house hunting, she bought the house based on the listing description. She said the small 55-by-65-foot lot was "about as much lawn as I wanted. I fell in love with the size (of the house) and tiny yard."

She said the one and a half story home, which sits on a rise, is not large but the vibrant colors have altered its appearance.

"The colors have given it a more grand look," Hamblin said. "When I come around the corner and see it, it's still a wonderful thing."

Emma Jackson can be reached at ejackson@annarbornews.com or (734) 482-4685.