

# The Schaffer Home

***7 Buffalo Street***

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On a quiet downtown street corner in Clarkston, a sunshine-yellow house stands dreamlike. In passing, this bright, picturesque home—its owners warmly refer to it by its address, 7 Buffalo Street—looks like the epitome of enjoyable small-town life, and it isn't far from it. This colorful, manicured home was constructed in 1867, just two years after the e√nd of the Civil War, making it a valuable contribution to the collection of Clarkston historical homes. The original building on the site, a Greek Revival-style structure built as early as 1835, was nothing like the structure today. The style was popular in America in the 19th century, as builders attempted to copy the classical styles of Britain and France at the time.

By 1878, S. R. Johnson owned the parcel, now doubled in value, from $350 to a lofty $700, likely because he added to the building, making it the Italian Revival-style home that stands on the property today. This home sports Italianate features such as a low-pitched roof, detailed first-floor windows, with smaller, simpler second-floor windows. Its flat front also echoes the Italianate style, along with the carved detailing on the windows.

More of a mix of styles is found in the home's interior. The main floor is traditional with small rooms packed closely together and little square footage remaining to incorporate spacious hallways or large open spaces. This was typical of the time, as hallways were considered wasted space that could be better used to create usable and practical spaces for the inhabitants of a home. This style illustrates the influence of rural American practicality on the formal and grand style of Italian Revival, known more for its spacious scale. While the first floor may be compact, the second floor has high ceilings, large spacious rooms, and contains a flowing central hallway.

Current owners Bob and Wendy Schaffer purchased the property in 2012. The Schaffers were not specifically searching for a historical home, but after receiving an irresistible offer on their home on Deer Lake, 7 Buffalo seemed like an opportunity for the Schaffers, who had always wanted to live within walking distance of shops and entertainment.

The Schaffers quickly made the house their own. Though Wendy prefers a more contemporary style, she wanted to make an effort to give a "nod to the old" and to "marry the old and the new" in her historical home. She wanted to prove that even a house over 100 years old can become a bright and happy home for a more contemporary family by painting the dove grey structure a bright, sunshine yellow, and creating a custom coral color for the front door. Additionally, the Schaffers painted the cornices, added shutters to the upper windows, and created a modern patio walkway.

Wendy shared that one reason why she wanted her home to be on the SCAMP Home Tour was to illuminate to people that a historical home does not have to fall into some specific stereotype. It can look different, unique, and personalized, just as 7 Buffalo is now uniquely her style. She also wanted to inform visitors that it is, in reality, easy to achieve changes one may want in a historical home, and the process of applying to the Clarkston Historic District for renovations and improvements is far simpler and convenient than many people believe.

The renovations to her home felt like a community effort, says Wendy, with people passing by the house commenting on the progress as they walk down Buffalo Street, and even giving their opinions on the changes. The Schaffers' daughter jokingly refers to the popular house as a "fishbowl", referring to the constant attention. The Schaffers find this community observation both funny and enjoyable. Community involvement is just another part of the historical home experience, and now the entire community can enjoy the bright and lively home that 7 Buffalo has become.

