

House rolls down the street

6/26/2009

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Post-Bulletin, Rochester MN

A day before Rochesterfest's Grand Parade, residents of an inner-city neighborhood were treated to the sight of a rare procession.

A 1 1/2-half-story stucco house, three-quarters of a century old, rolled five blocks down Second Street Northwest, in the Kutzky Park neighborhood, to a new location.

"It's pretty cool," said 7-year-old Ethan Egger, one of dozens of neighbors watching from the sidewalk as the house rolled by, brushing the treetops.

Ethan woke at 6 a.m. excited to watch the move, said his mother, Melissa Egger.

"We've watched this every day for the last two weeks," she said. "They (the house movers) have been out here measuring."

"I think it's really cool that my kids can see this once in their life," she said.

The house, donated to the Rochester Area Foundation's First Homes initiative, was moved from 1239 Second St. N.W., where its former owners, Sheri Brandvold and Bill Volkmar, want to expand their house and yard eastward.

It was being moved to 223 Eighth Ave. N.W., where First Homes bought and demolished a house that had been severely damaged by fire in August 2007.

Moving the house required permits or review from about a dozen different agencies or groups, including Rochester Public Works, the Building Safety Department and Rochester Public Utilities. Three trees had to be removed and dozens more were severely trimmed.

The move took about four hours, beginning at 8 a.m. The house crept along behind tree trimmers and electricians who detached street-spanning power lines. Clean-up and reconnections followed behind.

Moving expenses were about \$34,200, said Adam Ferrari, First Homes' project manager in charge of the move. The entire project budget is about \$165,000, a figure that includes a 20 percent contingency, he said.

"We're paying less in the moving than we would in an acquisition," Ferrari said.

The house will be re-roofed, its chimney and fireplace reassembled, and new radiant heat piping installed.

"It's in superb condition," Ferrari said. "It's got all hardwood floors throughout no painted woodwork."

First Homes hopes to have the house restored to an appraised value of \$150,000 by fall. It will be offered at a discount price \$110,000 to a buyer meeting income qualifications. For example, the income requirement for a family of four is \$62,000 or less.