

# Do you live in a Sears Kit Home?

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My family grew up on the Easthill and I have always loved the structure of homes I rode by on my bike and went trick or treating to on Halloween. But it wasn't until I was helping my 'then future husband' purchase a home that I noticed how similar many of the Easthill homes look. In fact, you could say some looked exactly the same.

So I went sleuthing... I knew major department stores sold home plans, so I started with Sears and immediately I found information on the 'modern homes' that were sold to the public in 'kits'. The 'archives'



website: <http://www.searsarchives.com/homes/index.htm> states:

*"From 1908–1940, Sears, Roebuck and Company sold more than 100,000 homes through their mail order Modern Homes program. Over that time Sears designed 447 different housing styles, from the elaborate multistory Ivanhoe, with its elegant French doors and art glass windows, to the simpler Goldenrod, which served as a quaint, three-room and no-bath cottage for summer vacationers. (An outhouse could be purchased separately for Goldenrod and similar cottage dwellers.) Customers could choose a house to suit their individual tastes and budgets."*

The website goes on to say that there seems to be a large number of these homes in towns near railroad lines – since this is how the entire house, from roof shingles to electrical plates, were delivered. You literally went over and picked up your entire house and built it from the kit with the plans that were provided. The first kit homes were priced from 695.00 to 4,115.00 – for the ENTIRE house (where can I get one of these now a days ?!).

do you own a sears kit home

There are groups of homes that were sold during certain years. I went through the entire home collection from 1908 – 1940 and found that you can tell the years that our streets were built by the year of the kit home that was built on it.

I also contacted Rosemary Thornton who has written a book “The House That Sears Built: Everything you ever wanted to know about Sears Catalogue homes”. And told her about our Easthill in Eau Claire, WI. She was very interested in our little neighborhood. She said it was getting harder and harder to find these home is original or close to original condition. So maybe in her next book, our Eastside Hill neighborhood will make the pages.

If you would like to know if you live in a Sears & Roebuck Modern Kit home please go to the following website and look at the catalog: <http://www.searsarchives.com/homes/byimage.htm>

If you find that you live in a “kit” home – please email and let me know and I can contact Rosemary Thornton and send her information and pictures on your home!

Wouldn't it be nice if you could still look through a catalog, pick your house and within a couple months you entire home shows up on your lot, with everything nicely packed up (how did they get the lighting fixtures there without breaking them?) and your very own step by step plan on how to build your house.

Enjoy the Sears website and see if your house is featured. Then sit back and look at the craftsmanship that went into your home, all the sweat and hard work that someone put into your home while scratching their head looking at the blueprint and wondering... Where does this piece go ??

