

# ORLANDO HOME & LEISURE

## The Holdout

As tony storefronts came and went around it in a decorous blur, this old house never gave an inch.

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What a stubborn holdout the old Kummer place was. Despite occupying arguably the most valuable lot in Central Florida, the modest Winter Park bungalow held fast for nearly a century to the humble task of being home to the family that built it. For decades the stolid, craftsman-style cracker classic, finished in 1916 by a lumberyard owner and coffin-maker named Gotthilf Oscar Kummer, was the only private residence within view of the bustling shops and bistros of the Park Avenue shopping district. After years of relentless pressure to sell and more than one spurned seven-figure offer, the grandchildren of its original owners finally found a buyer they trusted in developer Allan Keen, who late last year paid just over \$1 million for a 2,500-square-foot home that had never even had central air-conditioning.

Instead of tearing it down and putting up a far more lucrative office building or retail complex, Keen restored the sturdy but unpretentious relic to its original condition and moved his company, Keewin Real Property Co., to the first floor. A civic mover and shaker whose family moved to Winter Park in 1964, Keen wanted to make certain that any renovations or repairs respected and preserved the home's character and charm. Like so many Winter Park regulars, he had grown to regard the Kummer home with the combination of affection and curiosity that we tend to afford, over time, to our hometown incongruities.

"I'd walked by that house for years and wondered why it was still there," says Keen, who was the original developer of Winter Park's Windsong neighborhood. "I can tell you that at this stage, I had no expectation of ever owning another building." So he thought, until he was approached about the home by **real estate brokers Bob Hahn and his daughter, Tessa**. At first, he only glanced with feigned interest at the one-page flyer the Hahns offered. Then he recognized the familiar old structure. "I saw what the property was and said, 'You've got to be kidding me,'" Keen recalls. "Of course I wanted it."

For decades the Kummer home's broad front porch – shielded by an old-fashioned wire screen and the vines of a night-blooming cereus – overlooked a changing world from the north side of Central Park, directly behind the outdoor stage, on a short stretch of Garfield Street that runs from the railroad tracks to Park Avenue. The elder Kummer had built it virtually single-handedly for himself, his wife and children, and to double as an office for his adjacent lumberyard. After he died, his daughter, Christine, lived there with her husband, David Kilbourne.

There's an interesting anachronism in the garage that the renovators left untouched. A Cold War-era bomb shelter built by David Kilbourne is tucked behind a large metal door, poised for an apocalypse, complete with four bunk beds.

Keen is assembling old photographs of the home, the lumberyard and the Kummer and Kilbourne families to create a "history wall." He's also placing a memorial marker in front of the home in honor of a family – and the loyal holdout that served them for so long.