

Situated high above one of Minnesota's premier lakes is this magnificent Arts and Crafts home built in 1905 by James Flett Cargill of the grain storage company. The house, designed by Hugh Garden of Schmidt, Garden and Martin, Chicago, which specialized in prairie and craftsman designs, was originally used as a summer residence. The elegant wrap around porch, stone foundation, and open veranda take full advantage of the lake and its striking surroundings. The owner, a landscape architect formally with the DNR, purchased the home in 1999 and clearly had a vision for the restoration of the home and its attendant gardens. She wanted a more natural landscape that would complement the natural materials inherent in the home.

The property, which is 2 acres, is approached through 2 stone pillars. The use of this stone is repeated throughout the property and in the foundation of the home. As you enter, on your right is the large sun perennial garden and on the left is the South Woodland Garden filled with a variety of unusual hostas, wildflowers, and other shade tolerant plants. The drive circles around the perennial garden to the entrance of house. This area had been used as parking for cars and for the entrance to the former detached garage. The garage was moved around to the side and tucked under the house thus opening up the front area for gardens. Today this has become the Main South Garden, a perennial garden filled with a diverse variety of plants that bloom from early spring to fall. On the driveway side directly in front of the house, Annabelle hydrangeas have been planted. Early spring bulbs begin the season providing color before the hydrangeas leaf out. Bordering the driveway on the east side is the prairie dropseed swale planted to handle water run off as the driveway slopes slightly in order to direct water away from the house. Early bulbs begin blooming in spring followed by native plants, prairie smoke and beautiful, blue camassia, providing color and interest before the prairie dropseed matures. Behind this is a stone wall crafted by a stone mason with carefully selected stones to repeat the elements of stone used throughout the property. You are drawn into the garden up stone steps and along mulched and brick paths. Both native and non-native pollinator friendly perennials have been used with the addition of some annuals for color. The only caveat is that the plants must have fabulous foliage when not in bloom and great, interesting flowers. The sheer number of unusual plant materials displayed and the diversity make this garden exceptional. The layering of bulbs and perennials provide color and interest throughout the growing season as bloom time flows throughout the space. On the North edge as you face the garden, an enclosure of wood and woven copper wire mesh has been constructed to keep out deer and other creatures unfriendly to gardens. Within this structure, raised beds for vegetables, daylilies, and other plants tempting to wildlife have been constructed. At the rear is a garden shed designed to complement the house and filled with garden tools.. This entire area is viewed from the kitchen and breakfast area of the home. The kitchen counters are dark green Brazilian granite which draws your eyes out to the vast green of the garden and woods beyond reflecting the design elements of layers using colors and texture so prevalent in the Prairie Style.

As you proceed around the house on the East side, by the remodeled back entry, an herb garden has been planted with easy access to the kitchen. On this side of the house is a large potting station with long counters that can be used for potting, flower arranging or double as a buffet for outdoor entertaining as it flows onto the huge porch that wraps around three sides of the house in view of the lake. The garage has been tucked under this area. To deflect your eye from the garage entrance, planter boxes filled with long flowering vines have been set above the doors of the garage creating a living curtain over the doors.

Originally the lake side of the home had a large sloping lawn down to the water and the boathouse with a small perennial border at the base of the house. The current owner, being environmentally sensitive and desiring a more natural setting for her Arts and Crafts house, abandoned the lawn and the perennial border. The beautiful natural stone foundation is now exposed. In place of the lawn, a savanna of native prairie plants was seeded on the hillside. Yearly, a controlled burn is carried out to rejuvenate growth of native grasses and plants and to manage invasive weeds and other unwanted growth. The original center brick path to the boathouse has been restored and rebuilt as was the boathouse. A buffer of native water edge plants has been created to capture runoff. On the far North side of the savanna, there is a narrow sloping lawn which provides a gradual access to the lake and is bordered by a garden filled with a variety of blue and yellow flowering plants, a favorite color combination of the owner. Near the water's edge, you will find a most unusual vine with heart shaped leaves, the Dutchman's pipe vine, climbing up chains. On the South side of the savanna and home, there is a garden filled with Minnesota native plants that can tolerate more shade and water as runoff flows from the natural slope through a rain garden to the lake.

The owner worked with two design friends who were her classmates. Together they created a landscape design that embodies important elements of Arts and Crafts design, reflecting the long horizontal lines of the water, the brick foundation, the porches, the roofline through to the perennial garden with its brick wall and gardens. Water has been carefully managed throughout the property. The owner, a passionate and very knowledgeable gardener, works daily in her gardens and has one part-time gardener to assist her. She has created a magnificent setting for this architectural gem.