



SATURDAY & SUNDAY

# Not just any old home tour: Eastwood ups the intrigue with industrial sites & graffiti artists

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BY TYLER RUDICK  
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**T**he East End bustles with new activity these days — [Dynamo stadium](#) construction is well underway, [Moon Tower Inn](#) serves hordes of hip hot-dog aficionados and new light rail lines prepare to circle the area.

This weekend, the 16th-annual [Eastwood Home Tour](#) looks to the East End's architectural history with a comprehensive self-guided tour of six neighborhood houses, offering a window into the present, past and future of one of Houston's oldest master-planned communities.

Also included on the tour will be the [Cage Elementary School](#) building, from 1910, the [Maximus Coffee Group](#) building (which was built as a Ford Model T plant), and the former Morse Candy factory, which is currently under renovations to become a dedicated [World War II museum](#).

"This is an event to really showcase the neighborhood for people who have an interest in older homes and historic architecture," says Karen Niemeier, a former president and public relations point person for the [Eastwood Civic Association](#), the group that organizes the home tours.

"We try to keep the event casual," Niemeier notes. "This is a tightly-knit community. All the homeowners will be available to talk about any renovations. All of our docents, who will guide guests through the history of the area, are neighborhood residents as well."

Developed in 1913 by real estate magnate William A. Wilson, Eastwood was envisioned as a somewhat more upscale counterpart to Woodland Heights, which the developer created several years earlier. After decades of extensive preservation efforts, Eastwood now maintains the city's largest intact collections of Craftsman, Art & Crafts, and Mission-styled homes.

The Hughes Tool Company — the oil-drilling machinery manufacturer steered by owner Howard Hughes into aircraft and film production — moved its [headquarters](#) to 5425 Polk in the early 1940s. The building, one of many large historic properties in the area, currently houses branch offices for several state-run agencies.

"The tour shows different houses every year to cover as many types of home styles as possible," Niemeier says. The six houses on view this year look to a range of early 20th-century architectures: a Sears kit house from 1915, a Chicago bungalow from 1937, and four varieties of Craftsman homes (including a rare Mediterranean edition).

Expanding beyond residential architecture, the Eastwood Home Tour also highlights the neighborhood's industrial past. Guests can visit the former Maxwell Coffee plant for a factory tour and an exclusive viewing of a massive 1939 mural created entirely from coffee beans. The owner of the Morse Candy building has opened up older portions of the confectioner's plant for tours as well.

Meanwhile, throughout the old Stewart & Stevenson plant at Harrisburg and Eastwood, graffiti artist GONZO247 from [Aerosol Warfare](#) will host a live-painting event sponsored by the building's owner, developer Frank Liu, who plans to convert the industrial complex into a neighborhood art center (Lui compares the project to New York's [5Pointz Aerosol Art Center](#)).

"Our goal is to bring aerosol to the East End," GONZO247 tells CultureMap. "Different artists have been invited to paint a bay door. They are all at different levels of completion with hopes to be completed by end of October."

*The Eastwood Home Tour runs from noon to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, with \$15 tickets available for purchase during tour hours at Eastwood Park (5000 Harrisburg). All sales benefit neighborhood beautification projects organized by the Eastwood Civic Association.*



Courtesy of Eastwood Civic Association  
Eastwood's Maxwell House execs pose before a mural crafted entirely from coffee beans, c.1959.



Courtesy of Eastwood Civic Association  
Girls making the coffee bean mural for the Maxwell House plant, which now houses the Maximus Coffee Group.



Courtesy of Eastwood Civic Association  
This 1,264-square-foot Mediterranean Craftsman-style bungalow was custom-built in 1923 to the specifications of Josephine Henderson.





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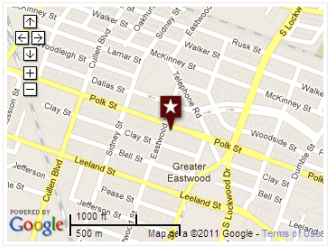
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Courtesy of Eastwood Civic Association  
Dating from 1910, the two-room Rufus Cage Elementary School served children living in the rural area east of Houston.



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