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Queen of the Birr Block

105 Birr Street

Some houses in the vast and varied historic Maplewood district stand out as showcase homes; the original builder's intent as focused on making a grand statement as on creating a family home. The grand old Queen Anne at 105 Birr Street is one such home, standing proud on its corner after all of these years as a testament to late 1800s style and design.

Built in 1885, and quite possibly one of the first houses to arise in this section of Maplewood, 105 Birr St. retains much of its original exterior grandeur. With its brightly-colored facade, multi-peaked roof, and intricate handcrafted molding and millwork, the home pops with personality. However, the crown jewel is the wrap-around front porch. Perfect for entertaining, this expansive space is surrounded by well-preserved brickwork that doesn't appear to have been painted or whitewashed, and has a set of finely carved columns leading up to handsome cornices at intervals around the curving perimeter. It's easy to imagine hosting guests here on warm summer nights.

The front entrance area was also clearly designed to impress and succeeds in that goal to this day. Upon entering the house, dark chestnut wood paneling and trim frame a dramatic grand staircase directly to your right. A massive window on the landing allows plenty of light to pour in, highlighting the intricate woodwork.

Parquet floors extend through original pocket doors into the large main living area. Three large bay windows take up one full wall, while an elaborate mantle frames the fireplace

on another wall. A dining area is accessible through another set of pocket doors. In addition, a smaller parlor is available at the front of the house. Also on the first floor is a full bathroom that needs some TLC.

In addition to the beautifully conserved, spacious common rooms, the kitchen offers plenty of square footage and opportunity. A full butler's pantry leads from the dining room to the kitchen. Hardwood cabinets in this space offer plenty of storage options. The kitchen itself is large, airy, and spacious, offering tantalizing possibilities to create the kitchen of one's dreams.

Together, the first floor rooms have a flow and continuous design that is hard to find in later homes. It's easy to see the home's original grandeur and imagine how the unique design of the past can be brought to life again.

The second floor features four well-proportioned bedrooms and a second full bathroom. All bedrooms have original hardwood floors and molding. The third floor is finished as well and could provide additional living and/or storage space.

105 Birr St. offers approximately 2,037 square feet of living space and is listed at \$74,900. Tours can be arranged by contacting Sharon Quataert Realty at 585-900-1111.

by Peter Smith

Peter lives and works in Rochester and is a Landmark Society volunteer.