

A Grand Victorian Steps Out in Style

Cady-Lee Mansion, Restored and for Sale, Is Again the Belle of the Ball

By SANDRA FLEISHMAN
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Historic preservationists for years feared the worst for the 1887 gingerbread castle at the corner of Eastern Avenue and Piney Branch Road in Washington's Takoma neighborhood.

The grand Victorian had been restored once in 1987, after falling into disrepair. But by the mid-1990s, the renovations had deteriorated. The slate roof leaked, and the sweeping porches sagged. The paint was

dingy and peeling. Working against a sale was the location—railroad tracks along the back, an apartment building to the south and a major intersection to the north.

But the 22-room Cady-Lee Mansion at 7064 Eastern Ave. NW has been reborn, 15 months after being bought from Takoma resident Gerald Kurtinitis by a concerned neighbor.

Not only is it back on sound footing—and footings—but it also sports updated slate and shingle roofs, rebuilt chimneys and porch railings, new air-conditioning sys-

tems, repaired plaster, and new paint, wallpaper and kitchen and bath appliances.

Owners Frances and Harold Phipps, who bought the house and half-acre of land for \$432,000 in August 2000, have now listed it for sale at \$1.3 million.

Can it be worth that? Frances Phipps, a restoration specialist, has no doubts. "I've already turned down two offers that were very close but not quite right," she said. The official reopening is tomorrow, from 1 to 4 p.m. (The price of admission is that visitors must wear an article of Victoriana, though

"interpretations will be generous.")

The special guest is to be Elizabeth Mattingly, 83, of Takoma Park, "the last living relative" of the Cady family, Henry Cady said. Mattingly's mother-in-law was the daughter of original owners Lucinda and Henry Cady.

The mansion is special, historians say, because it was designed by Leon Dessez, who designed the Admiralty House, now the official residence of the vice president.

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COURTESY OF FRANCES PHIPPS



BY ROCKY CARIOTTI FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Workers spent months making over the 22-room Cady-Lee Mansion at 7064 Eastern Ave. NW. The reopening, with a touch of Victorian elegance, is set for tomorrow.

H8 SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 2002

MG

Historic Mansion Is on Market

HOUSE GOSSIP, From H1

It is the last of what was once a long, elegant row of impressive mansions on Eastern Avenue. The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

Two showstopper features are a Tiffany-style stained-glass window on the landing of the two-story oak staircase and a turreted sleeping porch off the third floor.

The mansion gets its name from the Cadys and daughter Mary Cady Lee, who died there at 94.

Phipps rhapsodizes over the restoration efforts. She names all the companies on her Web site (www.cadyleemansion.com). "It took 15 months of 10-hour days, six days a week," Phipps said. "We had about 15 companies working with us, not including the day laborers. People who

see it now say, 'Oh wow, this is wonderful. Was this here? And I want to say, you don't understand what it took to get here.'"

In a tour of the house of seven gables, Phipps points out where architect Karen McK. Wood and color consultant Zoe Kyriacos removed dark though historically accurate wallpaper and heavy curtains and reopened two long-covered archways.

Re-lining the six original ornate wood-and-tile fireplace mantels took extra effort, Phipps said. To protect wallpaper above one mantel, a slim but tall Donnell Hall of Widner Chimney had to unfurl himself into a very narrow chimney flue.

Phipps credits Paul Oberg of Silver Spring for restoring the scalloped slate roof. "We had to go to Pennsylvania to find the right color—Pennsylvania Green slate—and that guided us in

choosing the new exterior color. Then Paul Oberg hand-cut each slate tile to match the design. If you look close, you can see the ones he did have sharper corners, but it's amazing how good a job he did."

Information about the open house can be found at www.cadyleemansion.com. The craftsmen and artisans who worked on the house are to be available to answer questions. The owners request that children younger than 7 not attend the open house. Shoes with spike heels are not permitted.

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