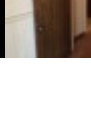
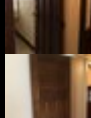
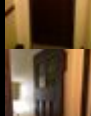
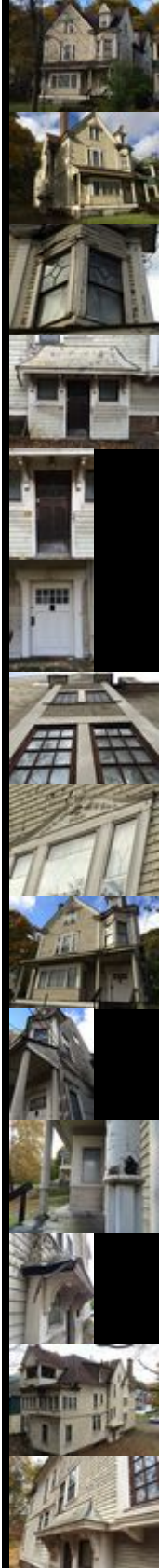


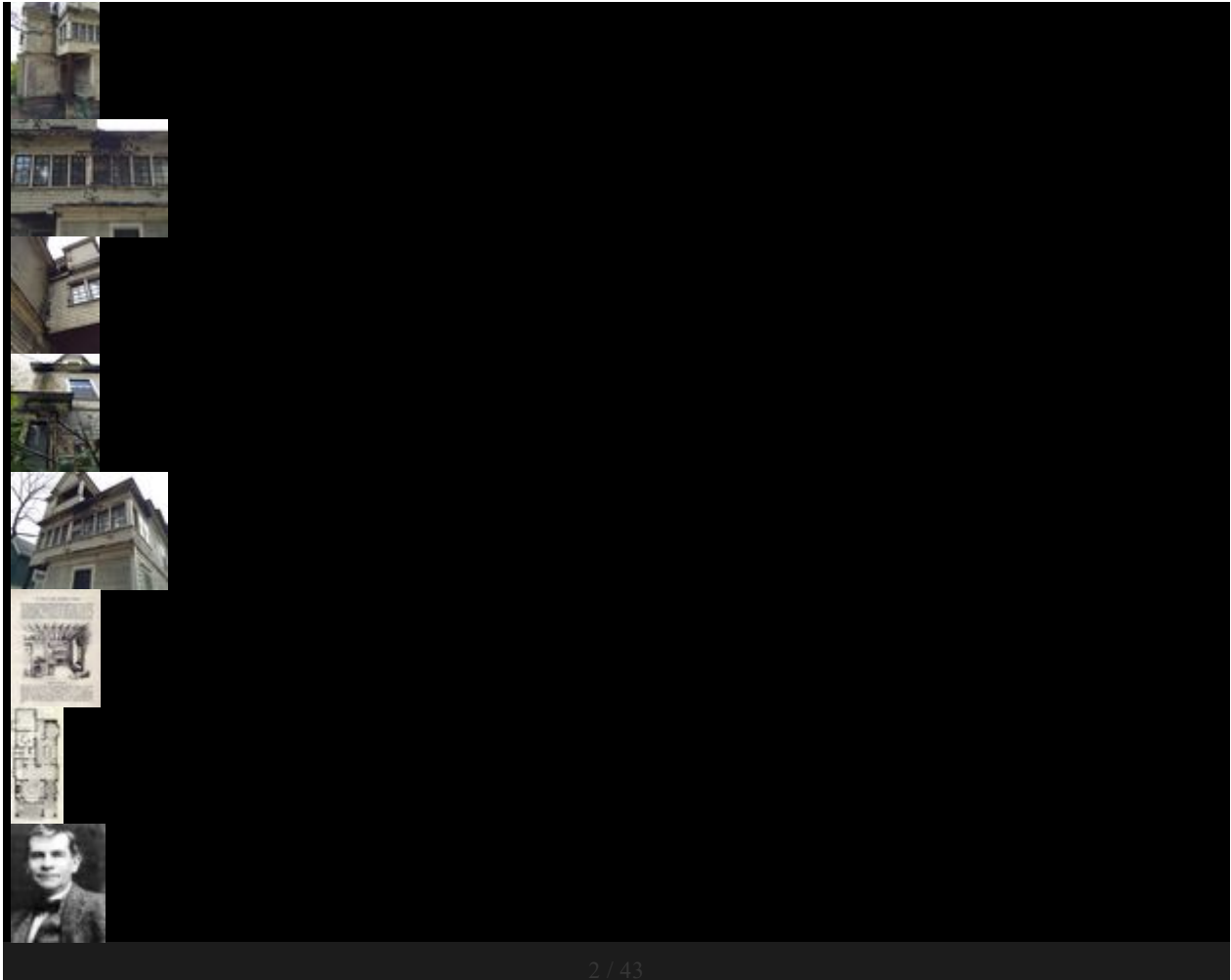
Look inside Syracuse home of famed furniture maker Gustav Stickley (photos)











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Plans are being made to turn the home of furniture maker Gustav Stickley at 438 Columbus Ave. in Syracuse into a museum.

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on November 22, 2015 at 12:30 AM, updated November 22, 2015 at 12:45 AM

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Syracuse, N.Y. — Strolling through the Syracuse home of famed furniture maker Gustav Stickley feels like escaping back to the beginning of the American Arts and Crafts movement he helped to father.

The exterior of the 115-year-old home at 438 Columbus Ave. still possesses its original Queen Anne style. But its interior is a different story.



Gustav Stickley

Stickley rebuilt the inside of the home in 1902 after a fire on Christmas Eve 1901. He wound up turning it into what is believed to be the first home in America featuring the Arts and Crafts style, or as Stickley called it, the craftsman style.

It's a style Stickley helped to make famous with his [mission furniture](#), characterized by its simple but sturdy designs and still sought by collectors 73 years after his death.

In fact, the home's interior looks like it was made from pieces of furniture ripped from Stickley's old United Crafts furniture factory on Burnet Avenue in Eastwood.

The building has been vacant 20 years. Now, the home with a storied past may have a future.

Plans are under way to renovate it and open it to public tours. The [University Neighborhood Preservation Association](#) and [Onondaga Historical Association](#) are teaming up to turn the home into an Arts and Crafts museum.

There's so much to see. The walls are still adorned with the chestnut paneling that Stickley installed after the fire. The ceilings still feature narrowly spaced chestnut beams. And the floors are made of chestnut planks. The home's windows still have wide chestnut surrounds with paneling underneath.

A first-floor fireplace is framed by two wood and glass doors leading to storage areas. The doors look like they came right off a Stickley display cabinet.

Even closet, bedroom and bathroom doors look like Stickley furniture. Many feature the same horizontal and vertical planking found on Stickley dining room tables and settles.

"It's the epitome of the Stickley style," said Gregg Tripoli, executive director of the Onondaga Historical Association. "It's a very important part of our architectural and design history."

Details are still being worked out, but plans are to repair the exterior, install a new roof, make structural improvements and restore the interior to its 1902 glory. The home will also be furnished with reproductions of Stickley's furniture -- many of the originals are held by collectors and museums -- and other artifacts from the Arts and Crafts movement.

"The plan is to have a major public and academic component and a revenue-producing component so the facility is sustainable," Tripoli said. "This will be an historical restoration."

The project will cost an estimated \$2.3 million to \$2.5 million, coming from donations, foundations and public money.

The Arts and Crafts movement was an architectural, design and fine arts style characterized by traditional craftsmanship and simple forms. It started in Britain in the late 19th century as a reaction to the more ornate and complicated designs common in the mid-1800s. The movement made its way to America at the turn of the century.

Stickley helped to popularize the new style with his furniture designs and publication of *The Craftsman*, an influential magazine he published from 1901 to 1916. The magazine featured designs for Arts and Crafts style homes, including his own.

An article entitled, "A visit to the House of Mr. Stickley," in the December 1902 edition of *The Craftsman* featured a description and drawings of the home's interior. Author Samuel Howe described it as being "singularly free from pretension," adding:

"It contains evidence of serious thought and honest intent, with abundant freshness and wholesomeness, which are innovations in these days of machine carving and jelly mold enrichments. Here is a house that has qualities generally lacking in architectural schemes, where their details too often smack of the dust of the drawing office."

Stickley had the home built in 1900. He lived in it until around 1905, when he moved, along with his company's headquarters, to New York City. (His United Crafts furniture factory remained on Burnet Avenue.)

The move to New York City did not work out for Stickley.

A 12-story headquarters building he bought in mid-town Manhattan proved to be too expensive. Competition from makers of lighter and less expensive furniture, some of it cheaper versions of his own designs, hurt sales. And World War I dealt a blow.

Stickley filed bankruptcy in 1915 and retired from furniture making. He moved back to the Columbus Avenue home, which was then owned by his daughter, and lived in it until his death in 1942 at the age of 84.

The home has had a number of owners in the years since Stickley lived in it. Although its first two floors look much the way they did when he lived there, the third floor was divided into apartments.

In the early 1990s, it was owned by David Rudd, owner of Dalton's American Decorative Arts, a store in Eastwood that specializes in Arts and Crafts furniture.

Rudd sold the home in 1995 for \$225,000 to the Audi family. In 1974, the Audis bought the [L. and J.G. Stickley Co.](#), the furniture company founded by Gustav's younger brothers Leopold and John George, in Fayetteville. The Audis still make furniture based on the Stickleys' designs in a factory in Manlius.

The home has been vacant since the Audis bought it in 1995 with the hope of preserving it.

The state provided a [\\$500,000 grant](#) in 2012 to help fund the home's restoration and begin the effort to make it a museum. At the time, the Everson Museum of Art was

in charge of the project. However, the museum, facing financial problems and a management transition, pulled out last year.

But the project is back on track.

David Michel, president of the preservation association, said the Audis will donate the home to the association, which will perform the exterior and structural repairs. The association will then transfer the house to the historical association, which will perform the interior restoration and prepare it for public tours, he said.

The project won't be cheap. Beth Crawford, a preservation architect and senior associate at Crawford & Stearns, said it will cost an estimated \$2.3 million to \$2.5 million.

The \$500,000 state grant is still available. Michel said an additional state grant of \$300,000 is being sought.

In addition, the Central New York Community Foundation is donating \$50,000 and the Arts and Crafts Society of Central New York is pitching in \$10,000.

If the additional \$300,000 state grant comes through, the preservation association will have enough to perform the exterior repairs, Michel said. Work on the exterior would start in the spring of 2016 and would take about a year to complete, he said.

A charitable foundation is being formed to help raise the money needed for the interior renovations.

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