

ISSUE NUMBER 86
THE MAGAZINE PUBLISHED
IN THE INTEREST OF
PRESERVING AND
RESTORING THE
MODEST AMERICAN
20TH CENTURY HOME,
THE BUNGALOW,
AND THE RICH LIFESTYLE
THAT IT AFFORDS

AMERICAN BUNGALOW

RESTORATION
ACCESSORIES
HISTORY
FURNISHINGS
EVENTS
ARTS AND CRAFTS
UPGRADING
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PROJECTS
LANDSCAPING



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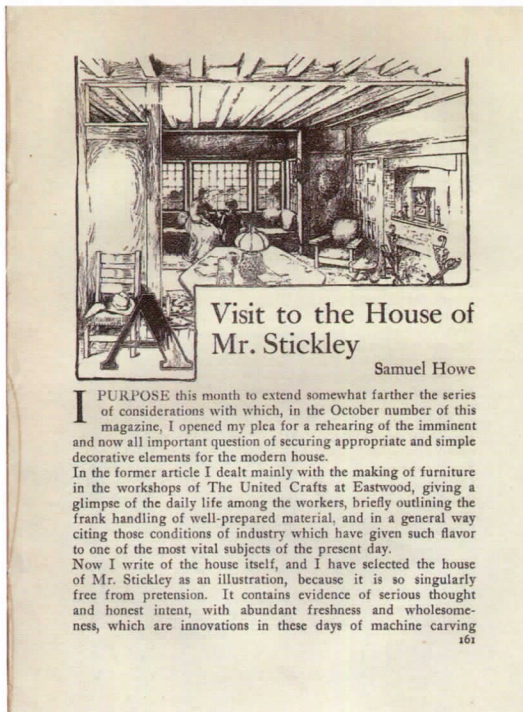
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with David Rudd



DAVID RUDD

THE GUSTAV STICKLEY HOUSE, SYRACUSE, NEW YORK



Visit to the House of Mr. Stickley

Samuel Howe

I PURPOSE this month to extend somewhat farther the series of considerations with which, in the October number of this magazine, I opened my plea for a rehearing of the imminent and now all important question of securing appropriate and simple decorative elements for the modern house. In the former article I dealt mainly with the making of furniture in the workshops of The United Crafts at Eastwood, giving a glimpse of the daily life among the workers, briefly outlining the frank handling of well-prepared material, and in a general way citing those conditions of industry which have given such flavor to one of the most vital subjects of the present day. Now I write of the house itself, and I have selected the house of Mr. Stickley as an illustration, because it is so singularly free from pretension. It contains evidence of serious thought and honest intent, with abundant freshness and wholesomeness, which are innovations in these days of machine carving

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ON CHRISTMAS EVE 1901, a fire gutted the inside of the Syracuse (N.Y.) Queen Anne home belonging to Gustav Stickley, the innovator at the center of the American Arts and Crafts Movement. Stickley took the disaster as an opportunity, re-imagining the American domestic interior and creating what is viewed as the first mature “Craftsman” home interior. His home on Columbus Avenue made use of rectilinear ceiling box beams and chestnut paneling to create a flowing sense of space, an unusual style at the time.

In 1902, *The Craftsman*, Stickley’s publication about the Arts & Crafts movement, ran an article titled “A Visit to the House of Mr. Stickley,” outlining some of the unique and cutting-edge features of the home. In it, author Samuel Howe describes the home as “... free from pretension.” He goes on to say: “Quiet harmony is the prevailing note of the composition, characterized by the singular uprightness and sturdy independence.” Howe looked at the home’s new interior and found its size, the flowing

nature from room to room, and the lack of ornamentation that was so popular in the Victorian era to be soothing, wistful, and simple.

Today, the Stickley House is in need of repair and renovation, and a project has been launched to convert it into a multi-use space for promoting knowledge of the Arts and Crafts movement. Passionate supporters have lent their voices to the project. For example, William Bowen, a senior member of the Arts & Crafts Society of Central New York, describes in a letter to Jean Egenhofer, Regional Grants Officer for the state of New York, how Stickley's vision was to create a uniquely American style that allowed for a continuity of space. The letter also confirms the group's support for the project, which has made efforts to preserve the house for more than 20 years. The group is dedicated to preserving upstate New York's rich cultural background, and has been at the forefront of the project from the outset.

My own letter was another cry to action: "Stickley was a proponent of the period's American design and art history, who had a vision of how we should live and what we should live with, and he used his home on Columbus Ave. as an example of what our home interiors should look like. America's first

Craftsman interior has historical importance that should be preserved and learned from."

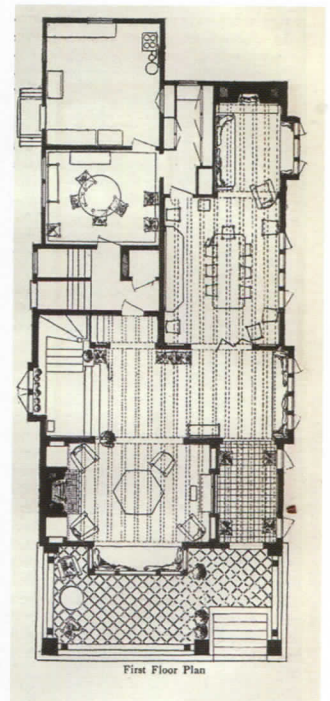
The Stickley property was purchased by the Audi family—current owners of the Stickley Audi & Co. furniture stores—in 1995 and has remained unchanged in the years since. Now, with community support and the family's generous donation of the property for the creation of the Gustav Stickley House Foundation, the property will undergo a complete restoration and be available to the public to enjoy. Stickley's own grandchildren and great-grandchildren wrote a letter to lend their enthusiasm to the project, as these excerpts show:

"As descendants of Gustav Stickley, we have grown up with the stories and history of this important 20th-century designer, including the time he spent on Columbus Avenue in Syracuse. Along with its importance to our family history, we recognize that this structure, which includes the first Arts and Crafts interior that Gustav Stickley did—where he worked out his design esthetic, is a significant component to understanding the evolution of the Arts and Crafts Movement.



VIEW FROM INGLENOOK.

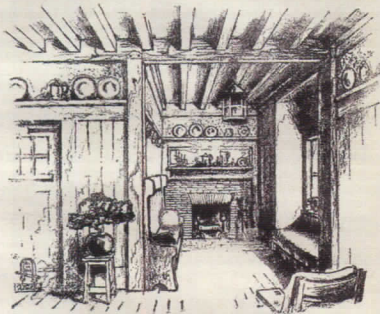
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First Floor Plan

A Visit to Mr. Stickley's House

No fiercer architectural battle has been fought than that in which the question of ornament supplies the field. Some ornament resents leadership. It affects to govern and not with a small voice, but with a shout. Not content to be seen, it must be heard. It eschews moderation. Assuming that collective ignorance represents dominant wisdom, it justifies its intolerance by its popularity.



Inglenook, Dining-room

The lovers of accessive and aggressive beauty clamor for more ornament, which grows as it goes, a snowball on a muddy road. Not alone is this house remarkable because of its conspicuous absence of carving, molding, and inlay by way of ornament, but because of the singularly frank manner in which they have been omitted. No false construction is allowed to take the place of

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“Over the years, several entities have taken important steps to ensure that this treasure has not been lost. Now, there is the opportunity, thanks to the grants from New York State, not only to preserve but to use this resource for the benefit of scholars, enthusiasts, and the greater community.

“Gustav Stickley believed that sound construction, simple design and practical function will always yield a beautiful piece. This project embodies his essential concept. We are grateful for the efforts of all those who have worked so hard to conceive and guide the project. Now we are encouraged by the proposition that this part of the local Stickley legacy will be carefully preserved for generations to come.”

For the first phase of the project, the University Neighborhood Preservation Association (UNPA) and its partner Home Headquarters will complete fundraising. Following that, actual reconstruction will begin in Fall 2016, with plans to be open to the public on a limited basis in Fall 2017.



DINING ROOM AND INGLENOOK.

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When the first phase of the project has been completed, the Onondaga Historical Association (OHA) will establish the Stickley House Foundation. The OHA plans to use the Stickley House as a multi-use facility focused on the Arts and Crafts Movement. The house will host lectures, presentations, and exhibits, and partner with education, museum, arts, and design entities in the Syracuse region to diversify the programming offered there.

We look forward to the onset of the project, watching it unfold and take shape in the months to come. And, we will provide regular updates on its progress. As Bowen stated in the closing of his letter: "Saving the Gustav Stickley House will ensure that future generations can study and interpret this important architectural milestone in the history of American design, the result of a movement that advocated 'better art, better work, and a better way of living.'" Preserving this home will return a richness to the Syracuse community by embracing an important part of its history.



You can find The Craftsman's complete article of "A Visit to the House of Mr. Stickley" on our website, americanbungalow.com.



ENTRYWAY

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