

Queen Anne

ON THE HILL

*Waiting for a buyer to recapture
the painted lady's charm*

The Queen Anne-style house at 690 17th St. in Astoria is so well preserved that it seems the original owners, Martin and Lilli Foard, should be there to welcome visitors. Only two families have owned the house, built in 1892. The Foards and their three daughters – all Astoria Regatta princesses – lived in the house until 1910, when they moved to Washington.

The house then was bought by B.F. Stone, whose family lived there until 1982. During a visit to Astoria, Melissa Yowell, great-granddaughter of Martin and Lilli Foard, learned that the house was for sale, and she bought it. She continued to preserve the house; it was put on the National Historic Register and was featured in the book, “America’s Painted Ladies.”

Yowell passed away last January.

Active in the historical preservation of Astoria, Yowell also paid careful attention to her own house, said Realtor Debra Bowe, of Windermere/Pacific Land Company. “She had every shingle, every newel post, every architectural detail inspected to see whether it needed work to keep it in a healthy condition,” Bowe said.

The 3,512-square-foot, four-bedroom Foard House is offered for \$324,990. It is ready for a buyer who wants to add a few touches to recapture the painted lady’s original charm.

Businessman and Astoria civic leader Martin Foard had the house built on a hill a few blocks from downtown Astoria to capitalize on Columbia River views from nearly every room in the house, as well as the back and front porches. Local historic preservationist John Goodenberger has called the house “one of the best examples of high-style Queen Anne in the city.”

The original carved woodwork around the doors remains in good condition, as well as the ornate Lincrusta-Walton wainscoting in the foyer and dining room. A graceful,



carved staircase, with window seats at the foot and at the landing, leads to the bedrooms upstairs.

An inlaid floor greets guests in the formal parlor, where business associates and prominent families were once received. A cozy corner bay window provides enough room for a table and chairs – perfect for reading a book, engaging in a friendly conversation or playing board games while looking out toward the river.

Adjacent to the parlor is the library, where the carved wood fireplace could once again become a center of warmth on chilly days.

The original transom windows, which helped to regulate air flow in the house, remain over the library and dining room doorways. Electrical and forced air heating systems have been updated, and the house is served by the city’s sewer system.

Just like any century-old home, it has its quirks – the small butler’s pantry just off the formal dining room, for instance, also acts as a half-bath.

While the kitchen has been updated with stainless steel appliances – including a gas stove, microwave and dishwasher – it still blends in with the home’s ambiance.

A back door leads to a porch that wraps nearly half-way around the house and offers more river views. Another fun feature saved from the past is the original “cold closet,” a box framed in wood with a wire mesh screen, where food that needed to stay cool was stored. The “closet” is attached near the back door on the porch.

Up the staircase, which could easily be made elegant again, there are four bedrooms and two baths. One bedroom has a seat under a large window looking toward the river; another bedroom



includes a small balcony, also with a river view.

A third bedroom contains space where a sink – or a washer and dryer – might go. The fourth bedroom, which may have been the “trunk room” where the women in the house stored their seasonal clothes, could be a nursery or an office. Two full bathrooms – one with a walk-in shower and another with a claw foot tub – are down the hall.

Many of the doors have the original hardware, including the built-in linen closet and drawers in the upstairs hallway. The home also has an unfinished basement and attic. People who love historic homes would appreciate the Foard House, Bowe said.

Although the house is on the National Register, the home’s owners would not receive tax benefits or be required to open it to the public, she said.

Historic homes “do take a lot of care, but this home would be good for someone who understands old houses and who understands the architecture,” Bowe added. ■



Story by Nancy McCarthy | Photos by Steve Haning