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# Deering High Style

The 1868 **Leonard Bond Chapman House** delivers a storied past and a little panache for \$799,000.

BY COLIN W. SARGENT

**A**LFRED HITCHCOCK'S VICTORIAN mansard relic from the movie *Psycho* still exists in the Universal Studios' backlot in Hollywood. There's a long line to get in.

Wouldn't you rather buy the one in Portland, Mother?

The **Leonard Bond Chapman House** is no less cinematic, and clearly in better shape, than the rheumy wreck in the Hitchcock classic. Far from being the nightmare setting of very dysfunctional and toxic relationships, **90 Capisic Street** is a happy family home. It's on the National Register of Historic Places and was a Portland Symphony Showcase house, as opposed to being on the horror-movie tour circuit.

This "Mansard-style" villa with a graceful porch dates to the time in the 'lost Town of Deering' when the Chapmans were lords of the manor. This country seat was once

surrounded by acres of farmland. While *chez* Chapman didn't have broadband internet, they reached out to correspondents via carrier pigeons flying in and out from the roof of "The Spring House," a dependency behind the house with a matching mansard roof. The birds were released and recovered from a caged gateway that opened in the roof.

The main house "is a well-preserved example of the Style with Italianate detailing," according to the National Register papers. It's hard to miss the three-story tower [once capped by lovely iron work] and bay windows "covered by entablatured lintels."

## DIY MAGNIFICENCE

Notably, this "statement house" was "self-designed" by first owner Leonard Bond Chapman (1834-1915)," according to William David Barry and Patricia McGraw

Anderson in their *Deering, A Social And Architectural History*, "not far from his boyhood home." Chapman ran a successful nursery business before becoming enraptured by his hobby as a genealogist and historian for the Forest City. A member of Maine Historical Society, he nurtured a "remarkable reputation as an antiquarian, manuscript collector, and historian." When he died, his bound manuscripts and papers greatly deepened the holdings of the Society. We are in his debt.

## WELCOME INSIDE

Today, this "Second-Empire Victorian" is move-in ready. The house has been curated and kept up for generations. Think of George Bailey's family home *after* the fix-up in *It's A Wonderful Life*; not so much the 'before' which welcomed Beetlejuice. All the knob-and-tube electricity has been updat-



ed. There's a new boiler and a contemporary kitchen with snappy black-and-white tiles.

There are four coal fireplaces, one with exceptional faux marble painting.

The first floor features a spiral stair, luscious paneling and hardwood doors, and walls that fascinate with skip-troweling texture.

**YOU'LL JUST LOVE THE FLOW**

With 11 rooms in all, 3,848-feet of living space, and five bedrooms, there's a full bath on each of the three floors.

There's a step-down in the ell to the original servants' quarters.

It's a crime that there's no 'Zillow check' box for whether or not your property has an original, three-story carriage house with winding wooden stairs beckoning with fra-



grant woodwork. *Check.* Actually there are four levels, as this garage has a basement.

If foundations don't lie, at least part of the Spring House, erstwhile launching pad for the carrier pigeons, may have served as a privy.

**N**ow, it's a privilege to be in here, because it's been transformed into a dreamy office or painter's studio. Inside, a stencilled board bears the legend "Albion Leonard Chapman." Albion was Leonard Bond Chapman's son. Those who love to decode Portland may be saying, *aha!* Nearby Albion Street, connecting Capisic Street and Brighton Avenue, was named for this boy. For generations, The Breakwater School was called Chapman School, dedicated in honor of this family and its dominions. In this provincial neck of the woods, the Chapmans were Forest City Medici.

To track Chapman genealogy to Colonial times predating the Salem Witch Trials, visit <http://www.chapmanfamilies.org/genealogies/edw617en.pdf>.

Taxes are \$9,746. ■



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