Reviewed for Code Compliance
Inspections Division
Approved with Conditions
Date: 01/20/15

House at 57 Coyle Street, Deering (1900)
James and Renee Cabot, owners
Visited 23 September 2014

A splendid, large house in the "Colonial Revival" Style, it was built in 1900 as part of the Coyle Park development between Forest Avenue and Back Cove. "Colonial Revival" is a modern term which generally refers to the use of decorative elements drawn from early American architecture. The house itself clearly does not resemble an early example.

Llewelyn Leighton, the developer, purchased twelve acres from Moses Bailey in 1899, consisting of the former estate of John B. Coyle. Like Frederick Hinckley in South Portland, Leighton envisioned a whole community of houses of compatible size and style, and he set specific requirements for type (no businesses) and cost (a certain minimum).

Unlike Hinckley, a lawyer who was an amateur architect, Mr. Leighton did not design his houses, but worked closely with John Calvin Stevens and Frederick A. Thompson, Portland's two leading architects. Both were up to date as well as versatile. Lacking documentation, I would suggest that the architect for this house was Thompson. The house was built for the Pease family, probably Austin Pease, an illustrator who did promotional drawings for the development, and was occupied for decades by the Pease sisters, teachers at Deering High School. It had one subsequent owner, who acquired it about 1990 . The Cabots purchased it recently. For additional historical information see *Deering* by Barry and Anderson, available at Landmarks.

Long tenure by the original family may help to account for the house being in about 80 per cent original condition. It has been well maintained, the kitchen has been remodeled, floors sanded, a bathroom installed on the third floor, and much new wiring throughout. A number of windows have been replaced. Otherwise the place appears almost entirely intact. This is truly remarkable, and worth a great deal of care by the new owners, who clearly appreciate it for what it is.

It is a two and a half story house with hipped roof broken by dormers. It might be called a "foursquare," though the term usually applies to smaller, plainer houses of which thousands of examples exist. This house could be called a mansion, despite being sited on a mere quarter acre, the average lot size in the development. A front porch supported by square columns (Tuscan flanking the steps) and originally topped with a balustrade extends around the left corner; the left portion was later enclosed with casement windows over the balustrade which was backed by vertical boarding (the balusters appear to have been vertically cut in half). There is an oriel window in the stair which had originally a panel of leaded colored glass, typical of the era. The living room, in the center of the first floor, extends to the left, a one-story projection from the main block which continues in the breakfast room to the rear. Perhaps the architect's original plan called for a smaller living room?

The eaves have a deep overhang trimmed with long brackets resembling large dentils. Gabled dormers are on all faces of the hipped roof.

Inside, the central hallway extends to the left corner with a window seat at the front. The woodwork, including a paneled wainscot and stair with colonial balustrade, is of oak, stained dark and varnished. The cut out "wave" motif on the stair ends is from the Federal Period. A smaller parlor occupies the right front, at the center rear is a dining room, and the kitchen takes up the right rear. Except for the kitchen, the rooms are devoid of any obvious structural alteration. The varnished finishes are in perfect

Reviewed for Code Compliance
Inspections Division
Approved with Conditions
Date: 01/20/15

condition. The woodwork of the parlor has been painted white, as has that of the dining room. Both were probably finished like the hallway; the dining room has a coffered ceiling which begs for dark beams. The parlor entrance is a wide arch flanked by classical fluted columns, and the continuation of moldings through the arch made the change to paint somewhat awkward. A period effect could be achieved by painting the woodwork of these rooms in a dark shade, perhaps even false grained. Stripping is possible but onerous (non-toxic paint removers are now available).

The front entry has an attractive tiled floor, a common feature in late 19th century Portland houses of distinction. Textured wall coverings (now painted white) may be Lincrusta Walton or a lighter version known as Analglypta. These were originally in colors. Also typical of somewhat earlier Victorian houses is the use of leaded and colored glass, placed in the tops of windows, or in whole casements. One such in the parlor is apparently missing.

The living room, extra large as noted, has a high wainscot, cabinets, and fireplace surround in mahogany, retaining the original color and finish, a truly elegant room. Skylights let into the ceiling where the room projects give some added light but are sadly incongruous, indications of the fashion for "light and bright" which accounts for the white walls of most rooms. The skylights probably date from the 1990s.

In 1900 wallpaper was widely in use and probably covered the walls here. The papers have been removed, save in the breakfast room, and the walls done in white or pastel hues. This creates an unfortunate contrast with the dark woodwork which was never intended. If an authentic period ambience is desired, look into suitable papers (books are available) or paint in strong, darker tones. We don't recommend trying to refinish the "natural" floors; colorful Oriental carpets would be appropriate and would lend enormous character. The stairs should have solid or patterned runners in dark tones.

Some of the front windows have been replaced with double-glazed plastic units. The 2-over-1 layout has been replicated by a plastic stick. On windows of this style and size the change is not overly conspicuous; we recommend keeping them for now. A few wooden storm sash were noted, also some aluminum combinations. Both of these old treatments work well if in good condition.

Kitchen remodeling is inevitable. We recommend living with the kitchen as it is and learning just what works and what does not. The little pantry is a nice survivor.

The second floor offers five bedrooms and two baths. The chambers lend themselves to a variety of decoration, depending on their occupants. The bathrooms are of particular interest. One is a complete surviving 1900 example with walls and floor covered in white tile (octagonal floor tile), and original fixtures including the toilet which retains its vent pipe, and a tub-shower built in. One towel bracket is broken and might possibly be replaceable from a salvage dealer. Be patient, this bathroom is a prize. The second bathroom has a period lavatory and tub.

The most striking feature of the third floor is the period game room, finished in horizontal fir boarding. This is like similar examples found in large houses of the Western Promenade in Portland. Did it have a billiards table? Imagine getting that slate bed up to the third floor!

The fireplace in the right front chamber has a surround and hearth of tile similar to that of the parlor below. There is some damage along the front edge, but the pieces are there and should be re-set in mortar, after which the cracks could be touched up with grout and paint. Chimney flues should be

Reviewed for Code Compliance
Inspections Division
Approved with Conditions
Date: 01/20/15

inspected by a mason familiar with historic houses. If it is desirable to line the flues so that the fireplaces can be used, consider a cement treatment such as Solid-Flue. A gas-fired insert looks quite convincing and may be connected to a metal liner which is less costly.

Natural gas is definitely the fuel of choice, for all uses in the house: heating, hot water, and clothes dryer (and fireplace inserts). The existing hot water system with old radiators is the best type available for an older house.

As noted, much new wiring has been installed throughout the house. There is probably some old wiring still in service, notably in walls and ceilings. This can be difficult to replace, and any work must be done by an electrician skilled in old house work, if unnecessary damage to plaster is to be avoided. Wiring concealed in a ceiling does not pose an immediate danger. Individual fixtures may need to be rewired, as old #18 conductors may have worn or brittle insulation.

Removal of the large deck to the left rear is an excellent plan. A mere 2 feet off the ground, it could be replaced by a stone-paved terrace. As shown by the 1924 photograph, the house was painted in a pale body color, maybe a gray or green, with off-white trim, and dark green shutters. We recommend looking into such a scheme, when painting is indicated. But white is also appropriate for the period and the Colonial Style. The grounds are enhanced by a period garage (unusually large) and a massive white ash that surely predates Mr. Coyle.

Tom Hinkle
Joyce K. Bibber
Jon Hall

57 Coyle Street pictures

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE RESURGAM
Reviewed for Code Compliance
Inspections Division
Approved with Conditions
Date: 01/20/15

View from driveway

View from street--garage on left

57 Coyle Street

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE · RESURGAM
Reviewed for Code Compliance
Inspections Division
Approved with Conditions
Date: 01/20/15

Stair Hall

Living room

Trim on stair ends

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE
RESURGAM
Reviewed for Code Compliance
Inspections Division
Approved with Conditions
Date: 01/20/15

Above left: painted mantel in reception area

Above: Kitchen, with dark door to dining room beside passthrough to china closet.

Left Wall of entry, with Lincrusta-Walton on lower part, possible Anaglypta above it.

Reviewed for Code Compliance
Inspections Division
Approved with Conditions
Date: 01/20/15

Floor plans of 57 Coyle St. were drawn with reference to an earlier, much larger, and incomplete (lacking very front) set of plans, date uncertain.

Most of recent alterations were added from memory...

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE
RESURGAM
Reviewed for Code Compliance
Inspections Division
Approved with Conditions
Date: 01/20/15

ATTIC

Second Floor

BASEMENT