

History of the Freiwald House

1810 NE 15th Avenue, Portland, OR 97212



This majestic Queen Anne home was originally built in 1906 as a private residence for Gustav E. Freiwald (then age 42), the brew master and one-time owner of the Star Brewery and St. Elmo Hotel in Vancouver, Washington.

The Freiwald house is the only example of its kind in Portland's Historic Irvington District. It displays a unique blend of Victorian architecture and the more contemporary Craftsman style. It is now a Portland designated landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



*Gustav E. Freiwald
(1864 – 1924)*

When constructed, the house cost somewhere between \$11,000 and \$16,000 (both cost estimates are listed in published records of the day), making it one of the costlier homes built in Irvington up to that time.

Original Owner	Gustav E. Freiwald
Architect	H. H. Menges and Emil Schacht
Builder	Newell G. Patterson Co.
Year of Construction	1905 - 1906
Architectural Style	Queen Anne Victorian with Colonial Revival elements and Craftsman form
Date Listed on National Register	1997

ABOUT THE ORIGINAL DESIGN

Gustav E. Freiwald was a successful German brewer who operated breweries and taverns in towns along the Columbia River from Hood River to Astoria. In 1905, he hired Emil Schacht, a well-known German-born Portland architect, to design a grand house for him to be built in Irvington. Schacht had already designed a number of brewery buildings and other commercial structures for Freiwald and it was not surprising he got the commission for this house. However, soon after the plans were drawn up, Freiwald rejected them and turned to a little known architect named H. H. Menges to redesign the house.

The original Schacht drawings do not survive, but his other houses in the neighborhood were strikingly simple and strongly Craftsman in design and also reflected the influence of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement. The Freiwald house combines spacious rooms with large windows typical of a Craftsman home. The ornate decorative plasterwork of English architecture and elements of medieval architecture such as oriel windows are characteristic of the Arts and Crafts style. However, Freiwald evidently wanted a home with a more ornate and ostentatious exterior that would directly project his wealth and influence. It is believed that Menges took Schacht's design and added the Queen Anne exterior—an octagonal turret, a wide wrap-around porch with Ionic columns, and a large dormer with an arched window and balcony.

ABOUT THE FREIWALD FAMILY

Mr. Freiwald was born in Germany on July 11, 1864. He immigrated to Canada in 1884 or 1885. A few years later he moved to the United States. In 1891 he married Amanda Best in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Soon thereafter they moved to Vancouver, Washington, and later Portland, Oregon. Gustav and Amanda had three children: Albert, Hilda, and Eleanor. Freiwald's son Albert had two children: Albert and William. Mr. Freiwald died on April 24, 1924 at age 60. Amanda died in the spring of 1929, and Albert died in 1936. Freiwald's two daughters, his son's widow and her two children lived in the house until 1938. At that time, one of the daughters married, and Albert's widow remarried. The house was too large for the remaining Freiwald daughter and was therefore sold.

ANECDOTAL HISTORY OF THE HOME

Originally the Front Parlor was for the men and the Middle Parlor for the ladies. The men's cigar smoke was vented through the grating that now appears near the ceiling in the Front Hall. Pocket doors separated both Parlors and the Dining Room.

According to a 1966 interview of Mr. Freiwald's grandson Albert conducted by Jean Brownell, a student at Portland State University:

On the first floor ...

- the kitchen is still in the location of the original kitchen
- the current Rose room (off the middle parlor) served as the original master bedroom
- the Rose room bath was the only bath when the home was built
- the current office (off the front hall) originally served as an office

On the second floor ...

- the upstairs hall bath was originally a conservatory
- the small Avandel room was a sewing room
- the large Lavonna room (with corner turret) was a billiards room

In the early 1920's, Mr. Freiwald divided the home into two separate 2-story residences to accommodate his son's family. Each residence had its own street address. The division occurred between the current Dining Room and Middle Parlor. The original Dining Room became a Living Room for the rear residence, which also had two bedrooms and a bath on the second floor. At that time the back door was relocated from the Kitchen to the new Living Room to serve as the

entrance to the rear residence. The current front and back stairs each served one of the homes. The current office became the new Kitchen for the front residence.

After being sold by the Freiwald family in 1938, and in response to the housing shortage of World War II, the front half of the home was converted to a boarding house and the hall bath was added on the second floor. The rear half of the house was rented as a two-bedroom apartment. In the 1940's and 50's the bifurcated property had a series of owners. George Sydnor purchased the property in 1957 and is credited with preserving it as the Lloyd Center area was redeveloped in the 1960's.

IN RECENT TIMES

The home remained a boarding house and apartment until 1992 when it was purchased, renovated, decorated and licensed as *The Lion and the Rose Victorian Bed & Breakfast Inn*. At that time, the two halves of the house were rejoined, and the pocket doors between the Middle Parlor and Dining Room were removed to allow space for plumbing to support the addition of two more bathrooms on the second floor.

The current owners purchased the home in October 2002, and continue to operate the home as a bed and breakfast.

Today the home is beautifully maintained and graciously furnished in period style with the rich patterns and deep colors favored in the Victorian era. Its six bedrooms, grand parlors, and dining room are filled with antiques and provide a delightful retreat for its welcome guests—*“a fresh experience of Victorian comfort.”*



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