Elrose Home Is Being Restored

By ALTON BROUSSARD
Advertiser Staff Writer

Another of Lafayette's fine old Victorian homes, the former Crow Girard residence at 217 W. University Ave. is being restored to its former grandeur.

Mr. and Mrs. Elden Butcher are the new owners of the former family home of the Girards and they are in the second year of a restoration program on the beautiful old home. They have completed most of the downstairs work and are renting its facilities for occasional social functions.

The large home - its floor space totals 5,286 square feet under roof - was originally built by the late Crow Girard in 1900. Mr. Girard was a member of the well-known Lafayette family that donated property for Girard Park and whose contribution of a site for Southwestern Louisiana Institute, now the University of Southwestern Louisiana, made it possible to locate the college in Lafayette instead of in New Iberia.

Most long-time Lafayette residents will probably remember Elrose, as the home is now called, as the former Stansbury home. The late Mr. and Mrs. J. Foster Stansbury Sr., and their estate owned the home even longer than did the Girards - 47 years.

The Butchers bought the home from the Stansbury estate in 1976. Mr. Stansbury operated a confectionery in the old Gordon Hotel building near the Jefferson Theater in downtown Lafayette. Mrs. Stansbury operated the boarding house into which the Girard home was converted.

The Stansburys reared their children there. An annex in the rear of the house furnished sleeping quarters for the family boys. The late Mrs. Howard Foster, Carter, Francis, and Warren. The late Mrs. Mary Allee Stansbury Weber was their daughter, and a sixth son, Basset, died in infancy.

THE BIG ROOM - This corner of the parlor is a bay-window-like extension under the cupola. The windows extend from the floor up nine feet. The ceilings are 12 feet high. The light fixture at upper left was made to burn gas or electricity.

Elrose was designed for gracious living. The rooms are large and ample in number. One entered through a large, heavy door into a 10-foot wide distribution hall. The front door originally had a decorated glass panel of the period but it has been replaced with clear glass. The ledged, beveled glass transom above the door, however, has survived.

To the right, upon entering, is a formal parlor with bay windows and one corner of which is rounded by the two-story, seven-sided cupola, typical of the more elegant Victorian homes.

Custom-made over-sized windows in this room and in most of the others let in ample light and air. Although not demanding in appearance, the windows are a functional feature of the big home. Some are in two sections of four large lights each and others are in two sections of six lights each. The latter extend from the floor up to nine feet. The shorter windows slide into the walls when raised. Some of the window lights are originals of antique glass.

The parlor and dining room, which is beyond it, have been retained for their original entertainment purposes by the Butchers. A convenience then, as it is now, is the super-wide "pocket" doors between the parlor and dining room and similar doors between the distribution hall and second or informal dining room. These big doors are 14 feet wide and in effect form a removable wall between the rooms they divide, according to Mrs. Sara Stansbury, realtor who handled the sale of the property to the Butchers.

Originally the home had a kitchen separated from the main house, a turn-of-the-century practice to lessen danger from fire and to remove heat and odors from the main living quarters. Today the kitchen is attached, having been incorporated with the breezeway that connected the kitchen with the house and which was closed in.

The tall-type glass and brass electric fixtures that hang from the ceilings were designed to light with gas or electricity. Butcher said. These fixtures have been implemented with a dazzling crystal chandelier which the new owners have installed in the second reception room.

The second floor rooms, which had been converted by the Stansburys to bedrooms, are not being utilized now because restoration is incomplete.

Elrose is once again imposing, with its blue exterior and white trim, topped with a seven-sided cupola and roof. Two Dormer windows, one very wide, "let in the air" and light to the upper rooms looking out on W. University Ave. A handsome gallery, one of three which were originally on the home, is also graced with a turned banister railing. A second gallery that once ran alongside the north side was enclosed to make the bigger rooms even bigger. A third gallery surrounds the rear porches.

Perhaps the most charming piece in the home is a heritage item from Mrs. Butcher's family. It is a four-by-five foot, framed needlepoint portrait of two young ladies made by Mrs. Chapman M. Smith, Mrs. Butcher's grandmother.

The piece of art was produced in 1899 as a school project when Mrs. Smith, then Emma Jones, was attending convent boarding school in Houma. The yarn was dyed by the school sewing instructor and Mrs. Chapman worked from a stamped picture.

The new era into which Elrose has been guided by the Butchers enables the home to maintain its rank among the elite of Lafayette's dwellings. The gay affairs which it now hosts must also bolster its proud spirit. Surely, a home that has been incorporated with the breezeway that connected the kitchen with the house and which was closed in.

Elrose was designed for gracious living. The rooms are large and ample in number. One entered through a large, heavy door into a 10-foot wide distribution hall. The front door originally had a decorated glass panel of the period but it has been replaced with clear glass. The ledged, beveled glass transom above the door, however, has survived.

To the right, upon entering, is a formal parlor with bay windows and one corner of which is rounded by the two-story, seven-sided cupola, typical of the more elegant Victorian homes.

Custom-made over-sized windows in this room and in most of the others let in ample light and air. Although not demanding in appearance, the windows are a functional feature of the big home. Some are in two sections of four large lights each and others are in two sections of six lights each. The latter extend from the floor up to nine feet. The shorter windows slide into the walls when raised. Some of the window lights are originals of antique glass.

The parlor and dining room, which is beyond it, have been retained for their original entertainment purposes by the Butchers. A convenience then, as it is now, is the super-wide "pocket" doors between the parlor and dining room and similar doors between the distribution hall and second or informal dining room. These big doors are 14 feet wide and in effect form a removable wall between the rooms they divide, according to Mrs. Sara Stansbury, realtor who handled the sale of the property to the Butchers.

Originally the home had a kitchen separated from the main house, a turn-of-the-century practice to lessen danger from fire and to remove heat and odors from the main living quarters. Today the kitchen is attached, having been incorporated with the breezeway that connected the kitchen with the house and which was closed in.

The tall-type glass and brass electric fixtures that hang from the ceilings were designed to light with gas or electricity. Butcher said. These fixtures have been implemented with a dazzling crystal chandelier which the new owners have installed in the second reception room.

The second floor rooms, which had been converted by the Stansburys to bedrooms, are not being utilized now because restoration is incomplete.

Elrose is once again imposing, with its blue exterior and white trim, topped with a seven-sided cupola and roof. Two Dormer windows, one very wide, "let in the air" and light to the upper rooms looking out on W. University Ave. A handsome gallery, one of three which were originally on the home, is also graced with a turned banister railing. A second gallery that once ran alongside the north side was enclosed to make the bigger rooms even bigger. A third gallery surrounds the rear porches.

Perhaps the most charming piece in the home is a heritage item from Mrs. Butcher's family. It is a four-by-five foot, framed needlepoint portrait of two young ladies made by Mrs. Chapman M. Smith, Mrs. Butcher's grandmother.

The piece of art was produced in 1899 as a school project when Mrs. Smith, then Emma Jones, was attending convent boarding school in Houma. The yarn was dyed by the school sewing instructor and Mrs. Chapman worked from a stamped picture.

The new era into which Elrose has been guided by the Butchers enables the home to maintain its rank among the elite of Lafayette's dwellings. The gay affairs which it now hosts must also bolster its proud spirit. Surely, a home that has been incorporated with the breezeway that connected the kitchen with the house and which was closed in.