

Living History



Completed in 1872 for Emanuel Schloss and his wife, Rebecca, the home at 234 Winder Street in Detroit's Brush Park now serves as an inn. Built in the Second Empire style – distinguished by French architectural details popular during Napoleon's reign such as mansard roofs with dormer windows – the home rests on a limestone foundation a few feet above the ground to emphasize the elegant entryway with gray limestone trim. The home's projected window bays with decorative stone hoods and keystones add to the grand impact. A renovation architect was hired by the city of Detroit to reconstruct houses in Brush Park according to their original plans.

Historic home in Detroit offers JN a sneak peek of upcoming tour.

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The area of Detroit known as Brush Park began as a farm. Owned in the early 1800s by Adelaide and Elijah Brush (the second mayor of the town of Detroit and treasurer of the Michigan Territory), the farm was parceled out into lots by the Brushes' son, Edmund, in the mid-1800s when the new rail lines brought Eastern entrepreneurs to Detroit — making Edmund one of the wealthiest landholders of the time. He named many of the streets after friends and family members, including Winder Street after his friend John Winder, a local attorney.

Because the locale was conveniently close to the Downtown area as well as the river, the lots were snatched up by wealthy businessmen who built grand homes (among the first in Detroit) in various Victorian styles for their families, transforming the area into one of many elite Detroit neighborhoods.

Among the early residents of Brush Park, whose homes designed in the French Second Empire style led to its late-19th-century nickname, the “Little Paris of the Midwest,” were lumber baron David Whitney and his daughter, Grace Whitney Evans; Joseph L. Hudson; bank founder William Livingstone; and dry-goods manufacturer Ransom Gillis. World-acclaimed Jewish architect Albert Kahn built a home for himself in the neighborhood in 1906.

Brush Park was also home to Emanuel Schloss and his wife, Rebecca. The Jewish dry-goods merchant and haberdasher emigrated from Kleinstinach, Germany, in the mid-1800s and ran a successful store Downtown on Jefferson Avenue with his brother, Seligman Schloss, and a third partner, Siegmund Simon.

Emanuel Schloss also was active in the Jewish community — even so his professional success had gained him welcome in the elite neighborhood — serving in 1860 as president of

Open for overnight visits, special events and more, 234 Winder Street Inn also is a frequent stop for Linda Yellin, owner of Feet on the Street Tours. She will guide tours to the inn at 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Friday, April 19, and Wednesday, May 1. The narrated and escorted tours, called Detroit Elegance (\$69), include bus transportation from the Starbucks at Maple Road and Telegraph in Bloomfield Township to 234 Winder Street Inn, where lunch will be served, as well as a visit to the opulent Charles T. Fisher Mansion. For information about the tour, go to www.FeetOnTheStreetTours.com, or call (248) 353-8687. For more about the inn, go to www.234winderstinn.com, or call (313) 831-4091.

Temple Beth El (then known as Congregation Bet El), the first Jewish synagogue in Michigan.

His brother, Seligman, opened the Hannah Schloss Memorial Building (designed pro bono by Albert Kahn) in 1903 in memory of his wife (founder of the Jewish Ladies Sewing Circle and a founding member of the Detroit Jewish Charities) as a settlement house for Detroit's Jewish immigrants.

Such active members of the Jewish community and Detroit society must have entertained often — and in great style. In 1870, Emanuel Schloss began construction of a house at 92 Winder Street (his brother lived on the same street) that is still one of the most elegant examples of Second Empire architecture in Detroit.

Withstanding the Great Depression, use as a rooming house, racial tensions and more, the Emanuel Schloss House survived and has been restored to its original grandeur and registered as a State of Michigan historical landmark.

Now known as the 234 Winder Street Inn (in 1920, all Detroit street addresses were revised), the house's detailed historically accurate renovation was overseen by Mona Ross, director of the inn since it opened in 2004 and an active participant in the revitalization of Detroit.

“The house has so much history,” says Ross. “And I love hearing all the stories that people tell about the house and the neighborhood when they visit. There are so many stories.” □

Do you have a home you'd like to share with the community? Contact Lynne Konstantin at lkonstantin@thejewishnews.com.



The inn's double suite (connected through an angular cut-out in the wall) has its original settees (not shown), trunk at the foot of the bed and desk. Ross chose the hand-turned four-post beds to resemble what would have been used at the time.



Known as Rebecca's Room, this pink confection brims with original pieces from the home: a pair of silk-covered armchairs and delicate side chair and the oak fireplace mantel with its pink-stone surround.



The piano parlor is where the Schloss family would have welcomed and entertained guests; today, it is used for dining at the inn and for special occasions such as wedding receptions.



All of the china in the tea parlor is original. "We have so many antiques stored in the basement that almost everything we use is original," says Ross. "We rotate the items so the home is always dressed a little differently, but it's almost always original."



Ross retro-fit the original desk in the double suite and transformed it into an in-room vanity with a vintage sink she found at an antiques shop.