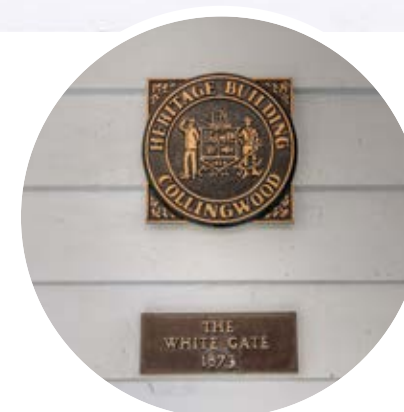




PHOTO: MARTIN JURGEIT

enter the WHITE GATE

STORY **LAURA CONNING**
PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**



ABOVE: Judith and Andrew Turnbull's house appears much as it did over a century ago with its white siding and original windows. A plaque from the Town of Collingwood Heritage Committee is proudly displayed by the front door. **TOP RIGHT:** Chris Skelton of Porter Skelton & Associates Ltd. stands in the widened front hall by the home's new wide staircase. The owners hunted for just the right fixture to hang above and settled on this fluted 1930s brass and glass piece.



There's a certain warmth and familiarity in the air at this Minnesota Street home.

Maybe it's the white wood siding that has endured since 1873 when the home's original owner, local lumber manufacturer George Buck, put it up. Maybe it's the original pine floorboards that have supported nearly 150 years of its owners' lives. Or maybe it's those lives themselves that have left the home with such character and charm.

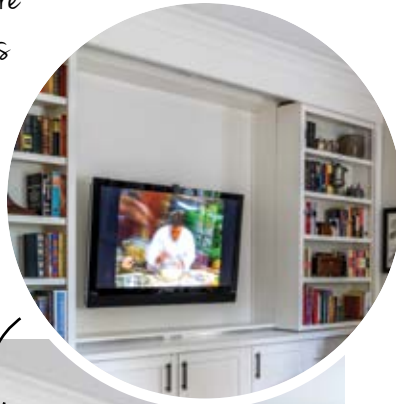
The history – and the incredible large lot with mature trees – was what drew its new owners, Judith and Andrew Turnbull, back to the property after touring the home with a realtor and being unconvinced they could commit to the updates they knew the home needed.

A colourful history of hospitality and entertaining has filled the home for decades. Mary Bellerby, who owned the home in the 1920s, used the front parlour area as a tea room, so the wood-clad, picket-fenced house became known as “The White Gate.” In the 1950s and 1960s, Lila Plunkett and her husband, Captain Merton Plunkett, owned the house. Captain Plunkett was the founder of The Dumbells, a Canadian vaudeville troupe circa the First World War, who would entertain soldiers around

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Bookcases in the front parlour, where the White Gate's 1920s tearoom was located, glide open to reveal a television.



the globe with marching songs, comedy routines and performances in drag costume. In the 1970s, Isabel Irwin, who ran the Collingwood heritage society, owned the home. She and her husband Dudley had the house raised onto a proper block foundation. A current neighbour even remembers being hired to chase raccoons and skunks out of the basement at the time.

Collingwood was a natural choice in retirement for new owners Judith and Andrew, who were living in Saskatchewan, but had both been raised in Ontario century homes. Southern Georgian Bay had been a gathering place during holidays and family affairs after

Judith's mother and stepfather retired here. Judith and Andrew are also skiers and hikers, so Collingwood was an ideal choice for four-season activities.

Andrew was retiring as general manager of Saskatoon's Delta Bessborough, a heritage hotel dating back to the Depression era. His 32 years of work in hotels, including the Royal York in Toronto (where he and Judith met), and the Algonquin Resort in St. Andrew's by-the-Sea, New Brunswick, had given him a comprehensive understanding of how to maintain the historical integrity of a building while updating its facilities for modern life. *Continued on page 132*



ABOVE: A side table in the dining room is laden with Turkish delight, treats and decanters of brandy.

RIGHT: With a stunning crystal chandelier above the elegantly set antique table, the dining room is formal yet comfortable. The sideboard holds desserts, tea and coffee, ready for the end of the meal.

OPPOSITE, LEFT: Glimpse into the front entry where a seat rack is at the ready for guests' coats. The homeowners display an interesting collection of canes.

TOP RIGHT: The parlour is a quiet place to read. Natural light pours in from windows on two sides of the room.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Sliding pocket doors can be closed to contain sound in or out of the parlour. The french glass doors allow light to flood the hallway.





Their affinity to history and hospitality won them over to the home, along with the confidence the Turnbells felt by appointing **Chris Skelton** of **Porter Skelton & Associates Ltd.** to manage the renovation. “It had some good bones, it had a phenomenal lot, and some character, but it was ready, not just physically, but mechanically for its next life,” Andrew remembers. The Porter Skelton team was instrumental. “Because we were starting the project from 3,000 kilometres away in Saskatoon, we really needed a one-stop shop,” says Andrew. He and Judith were familiar with the firm’s experience on other heritage restoration projects in the area.

“I think most people are attracted to the downtown heritage area of Collingwood because of an appreciation for the architecture,” Skelton notes, “but when it comes to putting modern features in homes, most people are not hidebound to a kitchen that could have been built in 1912. In Judith and Andrew’s case, they wanted the modern amenities, but they didn’t want it to look as though those amenities were imposed on the interior.” *Continued on page 134*

TOP: The long kitchen table was repurposed from planks from the thick walls that were taken down to open up the room. Only the range top is located in this area of the kitchen. A downdraft vent rises up from the island when needed. Custom roller blinds on the windows coordinate with the living room’s curtains. **RIGHT:** A butler’s pantry was designed into a former mudroom and is now where the home’s kitchen appliances are tucked away. The light in the pantry matches the pendant lights that hang over the kitchen island. **OPPOSITE:** With a rebuilt chimney, the wood-burning fireplace defines the living room. Blues in the antique rug are pulled into throw pillows and the sofa to create a relaxing ambiance. Arrangement courtesy of Paperwhite Flowers.



Judith and Andrew found a fitting spot to hang a Robert Bateman print of a white home with a white gate. The couple received the foretelling gift on their wedding day, decades ago.



LEFT: One of the three guest bedrooms upstairs is ready for children to visit. The rocking horse and the wooden train are family heirlooms that fit right in with this historic house. **BELOW:** At the back of the home, a mudroom with a pair of custom open cupboards holds all the family's outdoor gear. A large window overlooks the side gardens.



The Turnbulls worked with Skelton on a design that would respect the historical nature of the home, while updating the amenities and flow of the space.

The kitchen and living area were opened up, and what used to be a mudroom became a large pantry that houses the fridge and stove, and other appliances like the Turnbulls' coffee bar. This makes the kitchen and living space incredibly welcoming for family and guests. From their days in St. Andrews-by-the-Sea, Judith says, "We have that maritime hospitality vibe; everyone's in the kitchen." Twenty-four-inch pine boards that once formed a wall between the kitchen and living spaces were repurposed by **Wally's Woodwork** into a dining table and console table (that doubles as an extension for the dining table).

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RIGHT: Another guest bedroom offers a quiet retreat, with soft greys on the walls and bedding in the same tones. **BOTTOM RIGHT & BELOW:** In the guest bathroom, a large freestanding tub sits atop white tiles in front of the window. The room also offers a separate glass shower. The pedestal sink is in keeping with the period that the house was built. Arrangement courtesy of Paperwhite Flowers.



At the front entrance of the house, “There wasn’t that sense of grandeur that many of the older homes in town with broader staircases and entryways have,” Chris explains, “So the Turnbulls had us expand the width of the entry hall, and also put a new stairway in that looked as though it was original, but was just a little more grand.” These changes enhance the sense of flow through the home.

Original flooring was restored by **Chris Bickerton** of **Northland Custom Flooring Inc.** In the front parlour, custom bookshelves by **Clearview Woodworking** slide apart to reveal a television. Upstairs, four original bedrooms have also had their layouts adjusted. Judith and Andrew now have a master bedroom with walk-in closet and en suite, and there’s a guest bathroom occupying what was an underutilized part of the upstairs hallway.

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The couple aren't sure whether they chose the house or whether it chose them. On the wall in their family room hangs a wedding gift Judith and Andrew received many years ago: a large Robert Bateman print of the front of a white clapboard home, behind a white gate. Not until they were unpacking did the couple remark on the coincidence. Surely the White Gate is pleased with its most recent transformation, complete with heritage plaque at the front door. **OH**

BELOW: In the master bedroom, the curtains and bed skirt are in a soft floral pattern that draws from the wall colour. Judith and Andrew used Revere Pewter from Benjamin Moore throughout the house. **RIGHT:** In the master en suite, a double vanity resembles a fine piece of furniture. The marble counter and backsplash add luxury to the room. Arrangement courtesy of Paperwhite Flowers.



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