



home IS WHERE THE heart IS

BY JILL ELLIS // PHOTOGRAPHY BY TONY BOROS

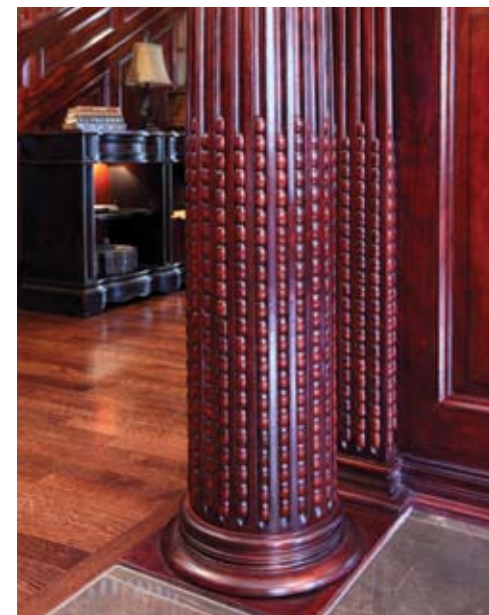
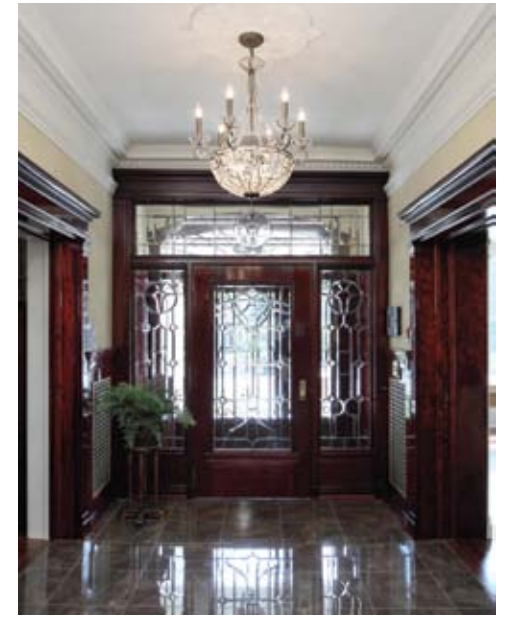
It was love at first sight for Roy Neufert when he saw a century-old Edwardian beauty. He fell for the lines, the character and the style of its faded elegance, looking past what time and age had worn away.

What started out 100 years ago as a family home now houses a thriving business, but the essence of its life as a family residence remains. Neufert spent the last year lovingly restoring a stately Waterloo Street abode to its original grandeur to quarter his company, **Global Warranty**.

It hasn't always been easy or inexpensive blending old world charm with modern technology and current building codes. Happily, most of the home's original features now fit right into the business-like nature of the building. For instance, "We ran the hard wires right through the dumbwaiter," says Neufert. Bringing the electrical and plumbing systems up to code was integral to being able to run a 21st-century business in a home built during a slower, gentler time.

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OPPOSITE: For Roy Neufert it was love at first sight. The elegance of this Edwardian residence caught his eye right away. Now, one year later, she houses his company Global Warranty. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** All's Custom Millwork rehabbed both the exterior and interior wood features of the home. The mahogany front door is framed and highlighted by leaded glass that had to be disassembled, cleaned and put back together by Sue Henson. Original features, like the push button switches, remind us of the home's past, while updating has rendered it usable as a modern office. The gold leaf gilding on the capitals of the cherry columns in the home's foyer has been renewed. Column detailing is carried all the way down to the bottom. This decorative plaster moulding is original to the house and just needed a facelift to bring it back to life.





OPPOSITE: The front staircase sweeps to the second floor, lined by cherry wainscotting and featuring a brass Art Deco lamp, original to the home. **LEFT:** According to Neufert, Robert McDonald had this Tiffany stained-glass window made using his wife as a model for the central figure. **BELOW:** The original type of marble flooring has been restored to this bathroom using modern materials. **BOTTOM:** (clockwise from left) Ken Bell oversaw the large project for Roy Neufert, while Jane Ebbs was the interior decorator. She worked with Neufert's fiancée, Rosemary Olcsvary, picking interior finishes and furnishings.



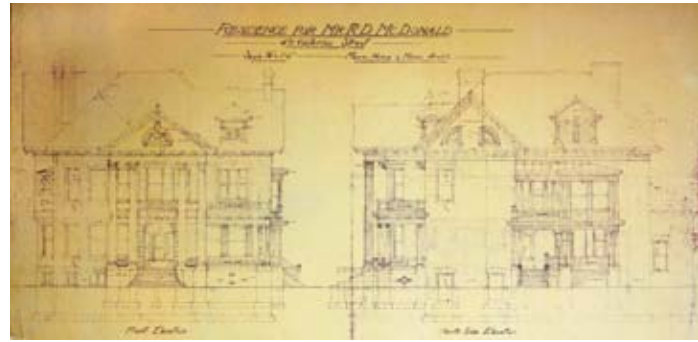
Constructed in 1910/11, this home originally belonged to Robert D. McDonald, who owned and operated Line McDonald & Co. cigar makers. The McDonalds resided at 471 Waterloo St. until 1930, when a downturn in his business forced McDonald to sell. The next resident, Major-General A. C. Spencer, lived in it for a short time. The then vacant building was taken over by local Shriners and used as the Mocha Mosque from 1937 to 1955. Siskind, Cromarty, Ivey & Dowler LLP practiced law there for the next 50 years.

During this time, Neufert discovered his next project when visiting a friend of his who worked for the law firm. Having been taken by the hidden charm of this grand dame, he decided to restore her to her former glory and use her as his company's headquarters. The building now has

two floors restored in turn-of-the-century grandeur and two that are sleek and modern. It provides office space for 26 of Neufert's 46 employees, with the remainder located throughout the country.

To make the century-old building tech-ready, **M J Electric Ltd.** had to rewire the entire building. Canny use of areas such as the space – running between floors – that once housed the dumbwaiter, and preserving push-button switches that were part of the knob and tube system, blend the building's old world charm with modern practicality.

General contractor **Ken Bell**, of **Apex Contracting**, oversaw the extensive reconstruction of the building, while **Jane Ebbs**, of **Interior Accents**, worked with Neufert to ensure the beauty of the interior was preserved and enhanced. *Continued on page 28*



The restoration project was a top-to-bottom job, with no area of the exterior or interior left untouched. With the original blueprints in hand, Neufert enlisted a crew of local tradesmen, artisans and craftspeople in his quest to restore this heritage building.

A big part of the facelift was dealing with crumbling walls, so **Fred Dowling of Dowling General Construction**, oversaw restoration of the brick and masonry.

The existing roofing was preserved with protection boards. **Wayne's Dry Deck** oversaw the roofing projects, while reworking and enhancing the distinctive exterior trim.

Huge columns on the front porch – both have been rebuilt – greet visitors to the offices of Global Warranty. The Corinthian capitals on top of the columns have been reworked and replaced by **Puglia Mouldings & Plasterwork Ltd.**

The beautiful mahogany front doors are highlighted with leaded glass, which was restored by **Sue Henson**. She also dismantled, cleaned, restored and reassembled the wall-size Tiffany stained-glass window on the landing of the second floor.

The wooden doors and interior panelling was stripped and restored by a crew from **MAJ Painting**. They have also repainted all interior walls. Because some of the interior woodwork was badly damaged, **AI's Custom Millwork Ltd.** had to fabricate panels to match the original cherry panelling. This company also did all exterior woodwork and storm-window replacement, working for a year.

What was once a living room is now a boardroom; the parlour serves as a reception area.

With a coffered ceiling, the home's original dining room, now a lounge, sports densely panelled walls and one of the eight original fireplaces. Though this one was intact, Neufert found several spots where fireplaces had once existed in the original home but had been covered over. He had these replaced with units complementary to the age of the building. All fireplaces now have gas inserts, installed by **Elmira Stove Works**.

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ABOVE: The original plans for the home when it was built in 1910/11. **TOP LEFT:** The den now serves as one of the several private offices in this residence turned business. **MIDDLE LEFT:** The den reminds us of days gone by when men retired to smoke while the ladies took tea in the parlour. One of the home's original fireplaces is flanked by built-in, glass-front storage units. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The home's living room now serves as a boardroom. **OPPOSITE TOP:** The parlour is now a reception area for Global Warranty. One of the home's fireplaces had been covered over and is now restored. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** Formerly the master bedroom, this lovely space is Roy Neufert's office.





Coffee breaks and lunch times are easy for Global Warranty employees. A full kitchen has been installed in the basement, as the original has been converted into office space. It features a large, granite island and full-size stainless steel appliances.

As many of the original details and features as possible were retained. For example, Al's Custom Millwork installed the original type of sash windows. Two urns that were part of the original exterior decoration were dug out of the gardens when they were being redone. They now sit proudly in the front flowerbed.

Some fixtures are completely original and hardly had to be touched to reintegrate them in the building's overall new look. One of these is the brass Art Deco lamp that sits on the curving banister on the stairs.

Some features are completely new, since the originals had been obliterated by time. This forced decorator Jane Ebbs to guess at what would have originally existed. This includes marble tile flooring in the foyer and tongue-and-groove wood flooring throughout the first and second floors of the building.

In some instances this creativity was assisted by hints from the past. For instance, a very worn check-pattern marble tile floor was found beneath two layers of tile and linoleum in one of the bathrooms. Ebbs

managed to find its modern equivalent to restore original character to the smallest rooms in the building.

The character of the home has been retained on the first and second floors, while the basement and third floor are all sleek lines and modern amenities. A full kitchen has been installed in the basement, featuring granite countertops, an oversized centre island and stainless steel appliances. This affords staffers luxury environs in which to prepare and eat lunch each workday. There is also a large conference room, two-piece bath and a lounge on this level.

On the third floor, a modern workplace atmosphere reigns with cubicles and glassed-in offices. **Home Innovations** installed flat-screen televisions with sound systems that enhance the building's rooms and Roy's office.

When this charming old world home met high-tech, modern office, a labour of love came to fruition for Roy Neufert and he's enjoying every day he spends at work - because home is where the heart is. **OH**

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