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The Oregonian

Back in Time: Period restorations strike balance between amenities, authenticity

Sunday, 09 September 2007
 JOHN KIRKLAND

Kirkland, John. The Oregonian: "Back in Time: Period restorations strike balance between amenities, authenticity", 09 September 2007. Homes + Rentals. p.H1-H2.

A century ago, Sears Roebuck & Co., Montgomery Ward and several other companies did a booming business selling mail-order kit homes. The homebuyer would pick a style out of a catalog, and the home would be shipped by rail in pieces: everything from windows and doors to staircases and shingles. You also could purchase plans and buy the materials locally -- an option that made economic sense in the timber-rich Northwest. Joanna Tompkin believes her 1895 Victorian at 1730 S.W. Clay St. in Portland's Goose Hollow neighborhood originated from a Montgomery Ward catalog, and that other houses on the block were probably mail-order homes as well. It's a point of historical interest and a great conversation starter, but when she bought the home a year ago, it wasn't enough to give it the kind of value she wanted.

It needed restoring to strip away 112 years of aging and bring the home back to its original charm. Over the next 12 months, Tompkin did just that, and in the process added 650 square feet of living space.

Period restoration is a tricky business that pits historical purity against modern practicality. If designed strictly for purity, the project uses only the materials, colors, styles and architectural layouts of the original. Taken to the extreme, a 100-year-old home redone for historical accuracy down to the last detail wouldn't even have electricity.

A happy medium for most restorations is to shoot for the spirit, not the letter, of the period.

In Tompkin's case, this meant tastefully straying from the standard, compartmentalized Victorian floor plan and opening it up to make the home more welcoming. She removed a wall that separated the kitchen from the living room and built a staircase that wraps around the kitchen's original brick chimney. The staircase leads to a new sitting area and a master suite in what previously was an attic.

Livable authenticity

She also brought back some older touches, giving some spaces -- the kitchen in particular -- a more period look than what had been there before.

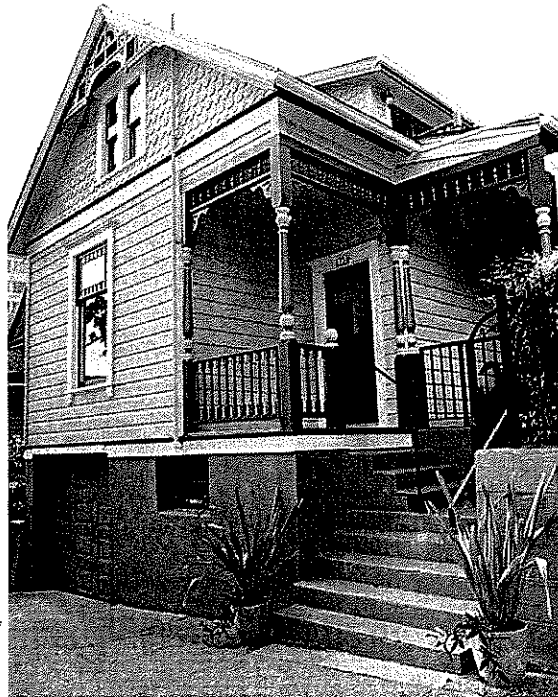
When Tompkin bought the three-bedroom, two-bath home, the kitchen had Formica countertops and multiple layers of vinyl on the floor. The crew from the contractor she hired, Eaton Construction, ripped out the vinyl and replaced it with white hexagonal tile. They also swapped the laminate countertops with butcher block, and replaced the particle board cabinets with natural stained alder cabinets.

Tompkin chose an Aga stove that has an almost woodstove-like appearance. It's the only appliance evident at first glance; the refrigerator and dishwasher have alder paneled fronts to make them blend with the cabinetry.

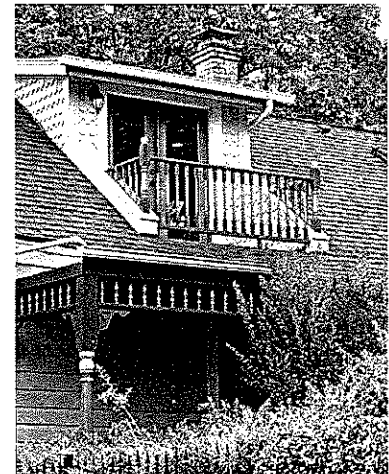
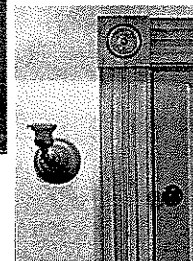
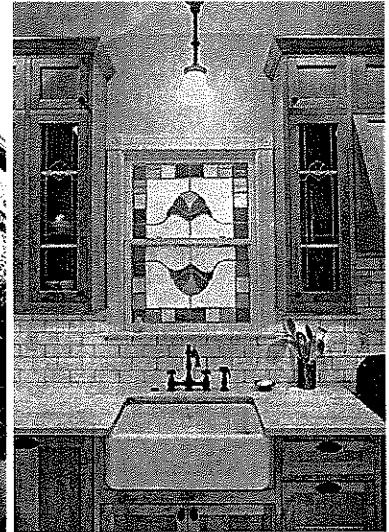
"I did my very best to make it look authentic, but not so authentic that it looks like a museum," she said.

Tompkin and Eaton Construction salvaged what they could, then filled in with new materials where needed. Much of the woodwork is refinished original, and the team managed to save a stained glass window that had been in the house since it was built. The new materials fit right in with the old, including a duplicate window made for the kitchen, crafted gingerbread shingles for the exterior and hand-turned bullseye doorframe corners. Tompkin also selected Rejuvenation fixtures and oil-rubbed bronze pulls for the cabinets.

But the biggest part of the job was structural and largely unseen. In order to convert the attic, the builders had to start in the basement and work their way up, adding more wood to enable the house to handle the added load and also to upgrade it to current seismic standards. By the time they were done, the amount of structural wood in the house had doubled.



Owner Joanna Tompkin renovated her 1895 Victorian in Goose Hollow in keeping with its era, redoing the kitchen with period-appropriate materials such as butcher block counters, alder cabinets and a pendant light fixture.



Portland freelance writer John Kirkland can be reached at kirklandjohn@msn.com

Photography: Steven Gibbons

A licensed real estate agent, Tompkin has listed the house at \$849,900. An open house will be held Sunday, Sept. 9, from 11.45 a.m. to 3 p.m.



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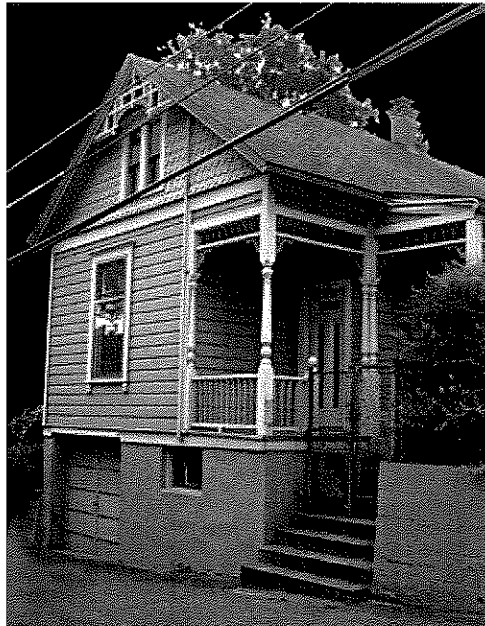
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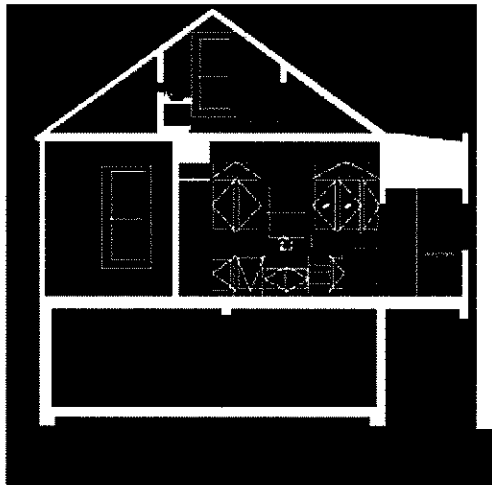
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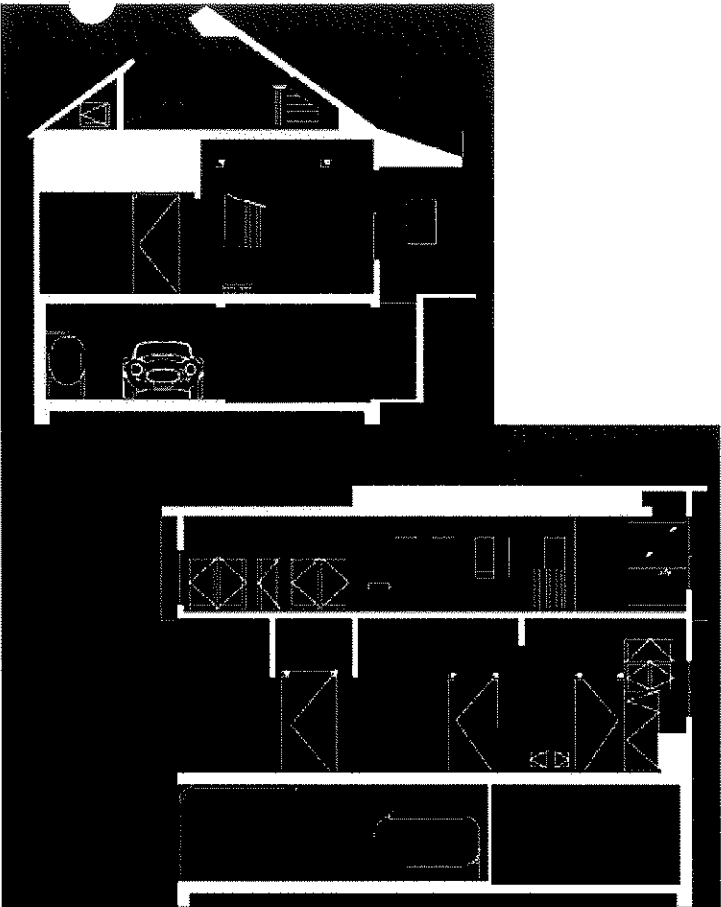
Bringing added value and rekindling the lost history of this c.1895 Victorian home in the core of Portland, Oregon.



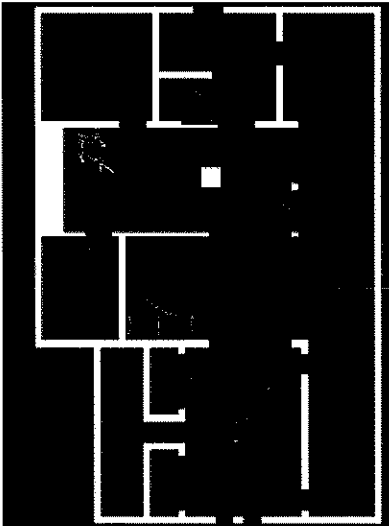
Elevation Drawing



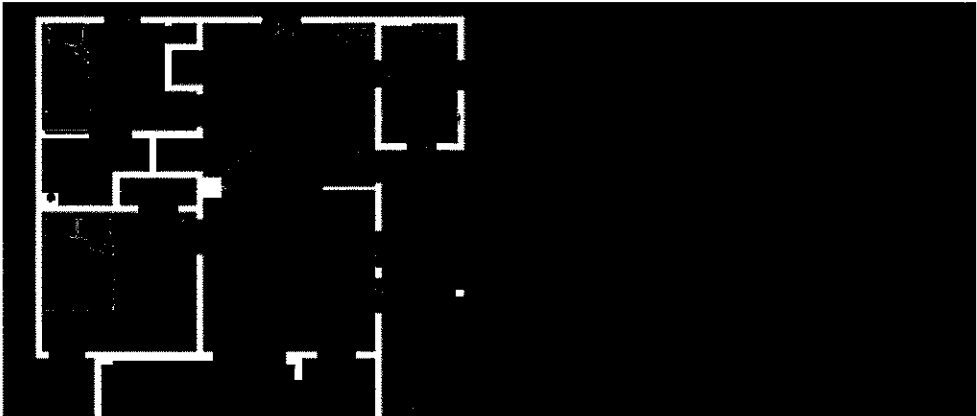
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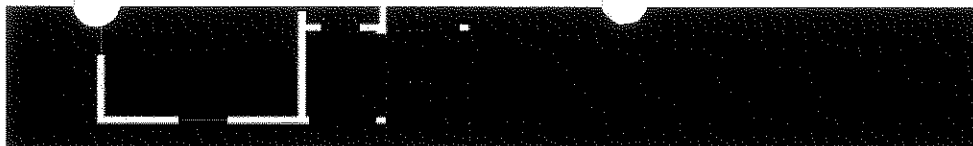


Section Drawings



New Master Suite, Plan Drawing





Improved Entry Level, Plan Drawings

PROJECT STATISTICS:

PROJECT: 1895 Victorian, 2006-

COST: purchase price \$300,000, sale price \$849,900

LOCATION: 1730 s.w. clay street, portland, oregon

CLIENT: Jo Anna Tompkin

PRESS:

Kirkland, John. The Oregonian: "Back in Time: Period restorations strike balance between amenities, authenticity", 09 September 2007, Homes + Rentals, p.H1-H2.

Otto, Bridget. The Oregonian: "Material Worth: Architect Fredrick Zal draws inspiration from building materials and their history", 8 March 2007, Home + Gardens, p.6-9.



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The Oregonian

THE NORTHWEST
Source

Material Worth:
Architect Fredrick Zal draws inspiration
from building materials and their history

Thursday, 08 March 2007
 BRIDGET A. OTTO

Otto, Bridget A. The Oregonian: "Material Worth: Architect Fredrick Zal draws inspiration from building materials and their history", 08 March 2007, Homes + Gardens, p.6-9.
http://www.oregonlive.com/hg/oregonian/index.ssf?/base/homes_gardens/117320911469810.xml&coll=7

Joanna Tompkin's quaint Victorian house sits on a quiet corner in Goose Hollow.

The home's mere 900 square feet and side garden chock-full of bulbs and flowering trees found a place in Tompkin's heart last summer. But there were issues.

How, she wondered, could she make use of the unfinished attic? More important, how would she get to the attic?

Enter Eric Eaton, a master carpenter and general contractor, who directed her to architect Fredrick Zal.

Zal, true to his protocol, talked with Tompkin about materials, in particular the no-longer-used brick chimney that ran from the kitchen up through the center of the attic.

"It was beautiful old brick, over 100 years old," Tompkin says. She loved it, too, and that cemented her relationship with Zal, who puts as much importance on materials as he does on design.

The integration of the old chimney with the new staircase is an example of how Zal likes to work. While others might have removed the chimney -- just as Tompkin's neighbor had -- Zal used it to gain access to the attic.

Almost as important, he used it because the brick was part of the home's story. To touch it is to be transported back to when the house was built and the chimney vented the wood-burning stove in the kitchen.

The marriage of the new staircase to the old bricks speaks to what Zal calls the material narrative -- how materials bring stories to design. Material narrative is something the Portland architect and owner of Atelier Z has considered for some time. The process started when he thought about how things come together, how we end up with our belongings, and how they relate to our past, our family and our history. Through this, he came to understand the important role materials play in design.

"There's a sense that these objects have already had a life. That's what material narrative is about. It's not so much putting a narrative into something, it's embracing the narrative that's already there. . . . If it's a beam, you think about the barn or the house that it came from, that it had been a part of, and you can imagine the cows that were tied up to it."

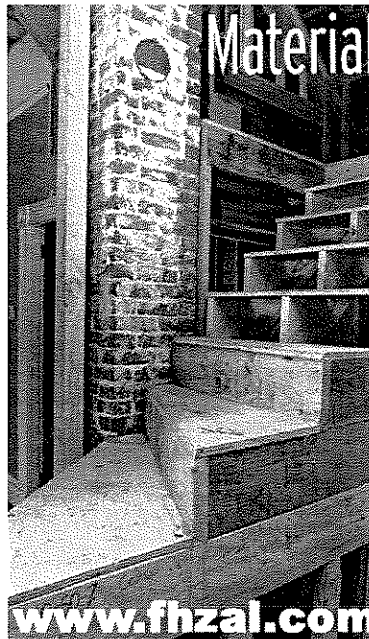
Zal, who writes extensively on the theory, practice and materials involved in architecture, sculpture and everyday life, is not suggesting reusing materials for the sake of recycling. Rather, he suggests reusing materials because the narrative makes sense once again in the new application.

He asks many of his clients to answer a fairly lengthy questionnaire that covers topics from sound to touch to movement to scale. He's not after deep thoughts; rather, gut reactions that provide an insight into how his clients use space and materials and where their priorities lie.

In explaining his philosophy, Zal pulls out the schematics for a project he's designing for Portland's Hill Gallery, the makers of handmade paper lamps and light sculptures.

"When you look at it," he says of the drawing, "basically, it's a box. As weird and funky as it might look at first, in reality it's a box."

That's what most retail space is, he continues, but then he wonders aloud: "How do you make a box more than a box?"



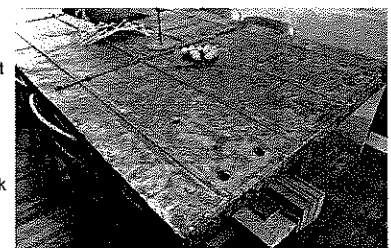
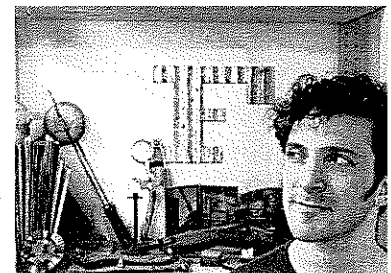
Fredrick Zal used the old chimney in Joanna Tompkin's 1895 Victorian as the spine to design the new staircase around. The combination of old and new adds a chapter to the narrative of the home.



BRIDGET OTTO

Bridget Otto: 503-221-8527;
 bridgetotto@news.oregonian.com

Photography: Marv Bondarowicz



In his own home, Zal has incorporated materials that make a

more with a box:

"In this case, it comes down to the materials used."

Zal explains that the upper level of the project will be a yoga studio. Garage-style doors will open at this level, which requires that railings be installed. Those railings will be designed to resemble classic wooden ballet bars. They will be warm to the touch and reminiscent of dance studios of the past.

As an artist and performer -- he was recently cast as a vampire victim in a pilot for a yet-to-be-named television show -- Zal understands interpretation. With material narrative, he says, it's about how we want to interpret the past for the future.

"You as the user bring things into your life to help you live your story. . . . When you bring materials in, you're helping yourself create the story you want the world to see."

A change of materials brought Nick Sherman and Treva Dea-Sherman's 1910 home in Laurelhurst back to its original glory. They had a photo from 1911 that showed a widow's walk off a second-floor bedroom. They loved that look and the story it told, but they wanted something grander in scale that would also replace the concrete front stoop that had been added at some point.

Sherman says the choice of materials was crucial in connecting the new veranda to the old home, and Zal and Eaton -- who also worked on this project -- knew that.

"There's nothing that would be a disconnect," Sherman says of the addition. "I've been on the porch and people have walked by and clapped." [link to project]

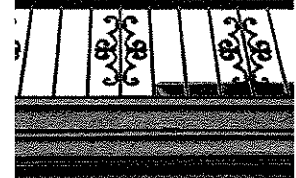
Zal truly believes that if you take the time to surround yourself with the things you love, you'll be happy.

"It's really just that simple," he says.

visitor ask: What's the story behind this table? How did you come up with that design for the railing?



[link to project]



[link to project]

Zal and master carpenter Eric Eaton knew materials would be as crucial as design when it came to creating a veranda for Nick Sherman and Treva Dea-Sherman's home in Northeast Portland.