

VERMONT

# RESTORE: A new face for an old building

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bright colors, in the tradition of the Victorian Painted Ladies, multi-colored homes highlighted by ruffles and flourishes.

She didn't get that feeling from the building, though. The building's history as a furniture store and men's club was decidedly masculine, not painted lady.

Plus she didn't want the colors to detract from the red brick and gray limestone. List tried several colors on the building and found that they didn't look the same when they were up high.

She was frustrated. Then Larry Williams, the developer doing the project, came up with a black and white photograph from about 1920. While the photo didn't show color, it captured the building before it was altered by modern windows and air conditioning units.

The whole building came together for List: dark green for the roof, putty for the metal trim, a dramatic gold leaf for the flower vases on the turret tops.

"I picked colors that complement the building as a whole visually," List said.

Color was just one of the challenges Williams faced in taking on the Hall Block. Restoring arched windows to the front meant finding antique bricks that matched the century-old ones.

Where to find them? On the Internet. Hours of searching turned up the right bricks in Massachusetts.

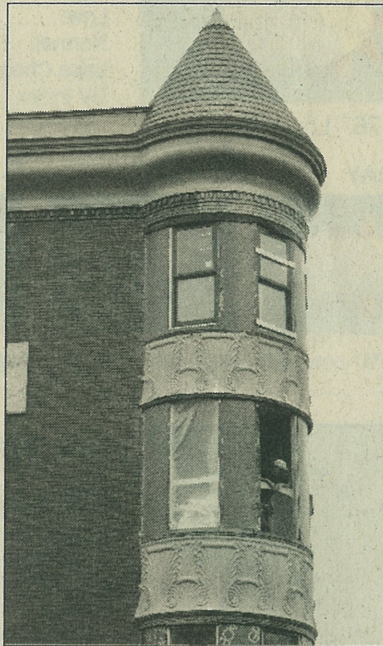
Some of the stamped metal had to be custom made in Toronto. The flower arrangements at the top of the turrets had to be cut off and sent out to be gold-leafed.

The brick turned out to be in worse shape than anyone thought. Repairs had been made with the wrong type of mortar.

Every window for the building had to be custom made. Asbestos had to be removed.

Williams hasn't been discouraged by the challenges. That's the way it goes with historic preservation, he said. Williams learned that lesson in 1986 when he restored the Maltex Building on Pine Street.

The former cereal factory was gutted and modernized for offices.



ALISON REDLICH, Free Press

**Randy Kuck, a builder for the Redstone Commercial Group, installs windows on the third floor of the Hall Block building on the corner of College Street and South Winooski Avenue in Burlington on Friday.**

Historic preservation is riskier but also more rewarding, Williams said.

"The risk is greater because with a new building you know exactly what everything is going to cost you when you start," said Williams, who is a partner in Redstone Commercial Group. "These renovation projects, particularly the historic ones, are a lot more interesting."

They are also more expensive. On average, restoration is about 20 percent more costly than building new, said Chris Cochran, a historic preservation specialist with the state Division for Historic Preservation.

To encourage preservation the state and federal government offer tax credits. The federal program offers a 20 percent tax credit and the state tacks on 5 percent. Williams plans to take advantage of both.

The restoration started in late June and only one tenant, Nan Patrick, who owns a women's clothing store on the first floor, has remained throughout the construction. The law firm Langrock, Sperry & Wool plans to move into the third and fourth floors by the middle of October.

Williams is considering moving his own office into the building.

Patrick has been a tenant for 21 years. She's looking forward to central air conditioning and a better heating system.

Windows that are now boarded up for air conditioning units will be opened, meaning more natural light in the store. She'll also have the chance to move dressing rooms, and the ceiling will be redone.

The project should be finished in time for the store's 25th anniversary in the spring, which solved the problem of how to mark the passing of a quarter century.

"I'm going to have a brand-new store," Patrick said.

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## Hall Block building

■ **ADDRESS:** 210-214 College St.

■ **BUILT:** 1894

■ **PROJECT:** \$1 million rehabilitation by Redstone Commercial Group

■ **HISTORY:** George Hall had the building constructed for his furniture business, which occupied all but the second floor. That was used by the Algonquin Club, a private men's club. The style is Queen Anne commercial, one of the few in Burlington, with unique features in terra cotta, limestone and metal.

■ **COMPLETION:** Tenants are scheduled to move in by mid-October.