

# Once a home, now a workplace

## Architect renovates former residence into office building

By LORI HALL STEELE  
Special to the Record-Eagle

Some people just like old buildings. Take Ken Richmond, a Traverse City architect who's worked on a number of northern Michigan restorations and renovations.

Most recently, he's converted a 5,000-square-foot Italianate-style home into offices at the former state hospital grounds.

"I think there are those of us that like buildings with a patina," said Richmond, head of Richmond Architects. "Things have happened here before us, and there's a certain integrity involved in the construction. There are people that appreciate that and look for it, and others don't."

Richmond and his wife Joan purchased the home a year and a half ago for \$150,000 from the Grand Traverse Commons Redevelopment Corp., the board overseeing the buildings and grounds of the former psychiatric hospital, which closed in 1989.

"I really like being up here, I like this part of town and I like old buildings," Richmond said. "I think it's just the very beginning of some growth that's going to happen up here, and I like being

part of it."

The white clapboard Victorian-era home had been vacant for up to a decade. It originally served as Traverse City's first medical clinic, built as early as the mid-1870s. After the asylum opened in 1885, it became part of the institution, and was likely used as for patient housing, with men's and women's wards. Various additions came through the years.

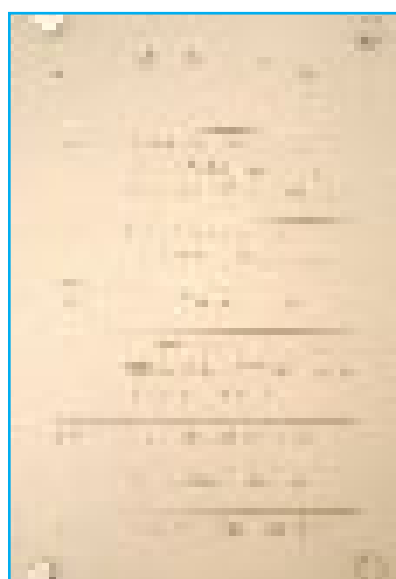
In the 1940s, the home was turned into four apartments that probably housed hospital staff. That conversion made Richmond's job easier.

"It was easy to turn into four offices because the floor plans were there," he said. "We turned bedrooms into offices, living rooms into conference rooms, and each has its own kitchenette and bath."

The fairly easy conversion — no walls were moved — made the renovation relatively inexpensive. All new infrastructure, however, was added, including heating, electrical and plumbing. Richmond opted to keep the home's old windows.

"I've been living now since Christmas with these ripply old windows and can't imagine the place without them," he said.

Work continues or is planned on parking, sidewalks, landscaping,



air conditioning and restoring the home's widow's walk.

Says Richmond, "I have a long list."

The former home now houses Richmond's architectural firm, attorneys, accountants and family therapists.

"They were clamoring to get in, and they were looking at it when it was its all-time worst," he said. "It appeals to some people in some businesses. For therapists, it's because it's a less clinical environment."



Record-Eagle/Elizabeth Conley

Local architect Ken Richmond bought this building that was erected in the 1870s. It was Traverse City's first medical facility. Later it became part of the state hospital and then staff apartments in the 1940s. It now serves as an office for Richmond and several other professionals.

"It appeals to me as an architect because it's a nice old building," Richmond added.

The architect routinely works on renovations and restorations of old houses, noting that not

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### Safer Cleaning

No decorative surface is more colorful or interesting than ceramic tile. No tile grout has an easy-to-clean surface. Although grout cleaners are available at your local tile store, you'll find it easier and less expensive to use common household products to do the job. For colored grout, vinegar works wonders — either straight or in strong solution. How often is it that someone recommends any kind of a cleaner to you that you can gargle — although you'd need to be a big vinegar lover to do so. For white grout, you have a choice: Bleach or hydrogen peroxide. Peroxide is slightly more expensive than bleach, but it's safer to use.

### Cleaning pet stains

Pet stains not only are unsightly, but also often result in less-than-pleasant odors. A simple and effective way to get a pet stain out is to use a solution of 2 tablespoons of Spic-n-Span in 1 gallon of warm water — working the solution into the area with a cloth or sponge. Next, rinse the area with 1-half cup of white vinegar in 1 gallon of warm water. This will help to neutralize the detergent and prevent it from attracting dirt. Finally, blot the area with a dry towel to remove excess dampness. Hard-hit areas might require professional steam-cleaning, replacement of the pad below, or even a bleaching of the concrete or wood substrate to kill the odor-causing bacteria.

### Removing white rings from furniture

Do white rings on your fine wood furniture have you perplexed? Contrary to popular belief, a white ring results from damage to the waxed finish and not to the wood. Here's a trick: First, make sure that the surface is clean and dry. Next, place a small amount of mayonnaise directly over the ring. Cover the area with a piece of plastic wrap and allow it to sit for about 30 minutes. Remove the plastic wrap and lightly rub the mayonnaise into the finish using a nylon scouring pad and working in the direction of the grain. Wipe up all the mayonnaise with a soft cloth and restore the luster to the area with some lemon oil or paste wax.

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