



## Local News

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Last Updated: 7:14 am | Monday, March 20, 2006

# House becomes TV star

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

In 2005, the city of Newport issued 521 building permits - 401 for residential housing - and the results of the work at one house are garnering national attention.

The restoration of 543 E. Fourth St., bought and rehabbed by married architects Deanna Heil and Jim Guthrie, has been featured on HGTV's Generation Renovation and will be featured on the DIY network this summer.

"Any time the city receives favorable media attention, especially for a project like this, it's a great thing for everyone. It showcases the fact that the city is dedicated to revitalizing its housing stock and that we are fortunate enough to have people like Jim and Deanna and countless others who are renovating Newport property," said Brian Steffen of the city's code enforcement department. Steffen added that the permits throughout the city represent about \$14.3 million in construction spending.

**ADVERTISEMENT** The building at 543 E. Fourth had been used in the past as a 10-unit apartment building. In 2002, the structure caught fire and sustained extensive damage. It sat vacant and exposed for 18 months until Heil and Guthrie bought it. They were familiar with the lot because they had rehabbed the home across the street and lived there since 1991.

Fire damage and mold from exposure required that 543 be gutted.

"The only parts left were about 75 percent of the floor joists, 25 percent of the windows and exterior wall. Everything else was removed. After four weeks of demolition, you could stand in the basement and see sky," said Guthrie.

Heil and Guthrie invested more than \$500,000 and two years of weekend sweat equity to give the historic home a modern interior consisting of two living units of 4,500 and 1,500 square feet, respectively, and a 1,000-square-foot roof deck overlooking downtown Cincinnati and Mount Adams. Heil and Guthrie occupy the larger unit with their three young children.

"I think the city was relieved to get rid of this property. They have been incredibly helpful throughout the approval and inspection process. They did their part to make it very

Steffen agreed.

"I don't think a lot of people realize the undertaking that Jim and



ZOOM The Enquirer / Ernest Coleman

Jim Guthrie and his wife, Deanna Heil, spent years renovating a wreck of a house. It has been featured on HGTV's "Generation Renovation."



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The house at 543 E. Fourth St. once contained 10 apartments. Now it has two units.

Deanna took on with this building. Everyone at the city is appreciative of their efforts in doing such a massive project," he said.

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