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Home rehabber says nothing replaces work

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

Paul Dibert is offended by home rehabs done on the cheap.

"Far too many people come in, slap on a coat of paint and throw some carpet down and say, 'It's been rehabbed,'" Dibert said.

"There are several problems with this: you're not rehabbing the property. You're covering up the flaws without fixing them - and not doing right by the buyer - and you take away the natural beauty of the great craftsmanship of the era."

ADVERTISEMENT Dibert has joined a growing number of people rehabbing homes in Newport. His focus is to bring the home back to its original state. His first rehab - completed with three men working on the project - was at 812 York St. It's a two-story, narrow brick home two doors south of the Stained Glass Theatre.

"It was nasty," Dibert said. "We took three Dumpsters out of there."

Four months later, the property was reborn. The home now has cherry floors in the living room and dining room. Granite has been placed in the hallway and kitchen. Dibert and his crew removed the strata of 110 years worth of paint that coated the home's fireplace. It now looks as it did in 1897.

Dibert, who serves as president of Design Systems Cable Bus, is trying to sell the home. The first taste of the rehabbing business has given him an appetite for it. He has recently started work on 839 Washington St.

Dibert says his focus, besides making a profit, is on saving history.

Real estate agent and restoration expert Terry Rasche helped Dibert for this first rehab.

"Terry is a wealth of information and a great resource," Dibert said. "If Terry doesn't know it or doesn't have it, he can tell you where to get it."

Rasche helped Dibert build a custom door that matched the original, repair some of the home's leaded glass and save some of the woodwork. Rasche appreciated Dibert's efforts to salvage as many of the architectural details as possible.



THE ENQUIRER/PATRICK REDDY

A growing number of people are rehabbing homes in Newport. This house on 812 York St. was fixed by Paul Dibert and a crew.

"If you start off saving the parts, you keep the character of the house," Rasche said. "It keeps the ambiance of the neighborhood, which you don't want to lose because when you take an old building and make it new, the neighborhood becomes a hodgepodge."

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