

As director of admissions for Quincy University, he enjoys helping students to discover their talents and plan for future success. So when Brown spotted a well-kept Cape Cod on a quiet city side street, he immediately saw the home it was meant to be.

"It had character," Brown says of the house at 214 N. 25th. "It had a good feel, and it wasn't a cookie-cutter. It showed craftsmanship, which you don't always find in newer places."

His appreciation of the home's clean lines and the friendly neighborhood cinched the deal.

That was two years and several major projects ago.

Fortunately, "being handy runs in my family," Brown says. "And I did lots of work around my mom and dad's home in Chicago. We all

used to like watching 'This Old House' on PBS, and I guess that's where I learned to look past the way things were to what could be."

A succession of female owners had given the home a decor dominated by floral designs and pastel colors. "There was a pink bedroom, and the kitchen was sunshine yellow, so I was eager to bring in some earth tones," Brown says.

He learned through trial and error the tricks light can play with color. "I painted the living room three times before I got the shade I liked; my first attempt turned out purple."

Technology aided the quest for the perfect paint for his bedroom.

"I told the people at Home Depot that I was looking for a khaki the color of my shorts. They told me that their color match system could do that if I gave them the shorts, so I went home to change."



Kevin Brown and his pal, Guinness, right, are beginning to feel very much at home in this Cape Cod-styled house on 25th Street, below. Brown has selected various shades of earth tones in his decor throughout the home as depicted in his living room, above.

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The resulting color is so striking that four of Brown's friends have chosen the same shade for their homes.



Tackling the large floor space on the main floor was another challenge filled with surprises. Brown had "always wanted hardwood floors," and hoped to find them under the worn carpet and three layers of tile.

Unfortunately, central sections of the oak floor had been destroyed by fire. Now a Pergo floor covering provides the look of the original wood with the convenience of modern materials.

Brown "has always liked Frank Lloyd Wright," and prints of well-known Wright buildings hang on several walls. The home, like many built in Quincy during the 1920s, features elements made popular by the Prairie style, including strong rectangular lines, especially in the large windows, and an open floor plan.

The space is the perfect showcase for the Craftsman furniture Brown has collected over the years, including a rocker that he discovered in an antique store as a QU undergraduate.

"I moved it home to Chicago, never realizing that it would return with me to Quincy," he says.



Brown's other projects have included a refurbishing of the second floor, including an alcove bedroom, inspired by Thomas Jefferson's at Monticello, and a complete updating of the bathroom. The recent Christmas break found him renovating the kitchen with stylish black tile and a pub theme.

Brown and his pal Guinness, a chocolate Lab, are beginning to feel that the house is truly theirs. While replacing the finial on the banister, Brown slipped a copy of the newspaper and his business card into the hollow space inside the newel post.

"Someday a new owner may discover it," Brown says, adding his own chapter to the history that makes homes with "character" such fascinating places to live.