

at 2311 Hampshire into a real gem

By Ruth Hultz

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In 1916 Henry C. Basse, manager of August Basse jewelry store, built a gem of a house at 2311 Hampshire.

The outside of the Prairie Box-style house is simple and solid, built of undecorated natural materials that Prairie-style homes are known.

But the home's interior, built on the four-square plan, sparkles like a jewel. It's the three sets of French doors, huge single windows and geometrically glazed sets of triple windows that make the house's interior literally glow. Light floods in from every direction, enhancing the open floor plan that characterizes Prairie-style homes.

Many families have lived in the Basse house and by the time Tom and Kerry Dickerson bought it in 1984, the house needed some polishing. They have been polishing the home ever since.

When they started restoring the house, Kerry's dream was to redo the home one room per week. But it didn't happen that way at all.

Instead, they dedicated years to restoring the home. The Dickersons stripped layers of wallpaper from the living room and dining room. They painted



the black kitchen cabinets a fresh ivory and papered the kitchen with cheery floral print. They pried up four layers of linoleum before they could put down a new kitchen floor.

The golden oak staircase and all the window, door and baseboard trim had been painted white over the years. Previous owners had made attempts to strip the wood, but it was a monumental job.

The Dickersons wanted to be the family that properly restored the home's beautiful wood to its original natural oak. They hired Johnson Painting to renovate their home.

Besides putting in new ceilings, skim coating walls and restringing all the win-

dows, the professionals stripped every inch of the oak trim on the first floor and refinished all the floors. They also installed new crown molding to replace the original molding which couldn't be salvaged when it was removed to hang new ceilings.

It took two workers four months to make the living room, dining room, foyer and staircase shine like it does today.

The Dickersons and their three children — Kory, Kristen and Nathan — literally lived upstairs or on the enclosed, heated front porch for months. But they think the inconvenience was worth it, because today they have a home that sparkles.

The Dickersons also have done plenty of behind-the-scenes work on their historic home. Soon after moving in, the roof started leaking. Roofers removed three layers and nine tons of roofing,

including a layer of heavy slate tiles, before they could put a new roof on the house.

The Dickersons installed new electrical service, put in a new boiler and installed two heat pumps for the front porch and for the third floor office and bedroom they had built.

Today, with the major restoration out of the way, the Dickersons are enjoying their house and looking forward to using the home theater room they are having built in the basement. As with the rest of the house, they are seeing that it is done right.

The Dickersons have made a major investment in their historic home, but they say that's all right because it is precious to them.

"Our surroundings are important to us," Kerry said. "We want our house like we like it."

