

Renovations to heritage building an asset to the town, BIA says

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WEEKENDER

Perth's heritage buildings are a grand reminder of the town's deep-rooted history, and if their walls could talk, they would surely have many stories to tell.

Over the last 138 years, the two-storey building at 35 Gore St. E. has welcomed many members of the public to such historic businesses as Geo. Kerrs Bowling Alley (1912), the Star Café (1913) and La Vogue Beauty Shop (1920). A residential apartment building since 1939, the well-known site was recently purchased by Paul Gagne of Carp, who jumped at the opportunity to restore the building to its original state. He says he hopes his work will now allow the building to remain an important component of Perth's downtown charm.

"I like heritage buildings and when I came across this one, I simply fell in love," Gagne said with a smile. "I have been restoring buildings my whole life and have been (working) on this one for the last 14 months. I feel a lot of satisfaction from the work I have been able to do, and the biggest reward for me is being able to leave my mark here in Perth."

Upon entering some of the newly renovated apartments, it's easy to see that each has been decorated in

its own unique way, Gagne explained while conducting a tour of the building. While all of the rooms will feature vibrant Spanish colours, hardwood floors and crown mouldings, some will come complete with special accents, such as detailed paintings, stained-glass light fixtures and mosaic-tile art.

"When I came in, I took out all of the old carpeting, flooring, plywood and tiles so that the original wood was brought back into play," he said. "(Through doing these renovations,) I feel that I've done something good for the town and I've had a lot of positive comments from people about the building's transformation," he added. "I am honoured to have been able to clean it out and clean it up."

After seeing the restoration work that has been done to the downtown building, John Clement, president of the Downtown Heritage Perth Business Improvement Area, said he was astounded by the amount of work and detail that Gagne put in.

"Any time a landlord makes alterations to the magnitude that Mr. Paul Gagne has done, while keeping a building's distinct heritage look, they deserve our gratitude and congratulations," Clement said. "This is definitely a plus for Perth's heritage."

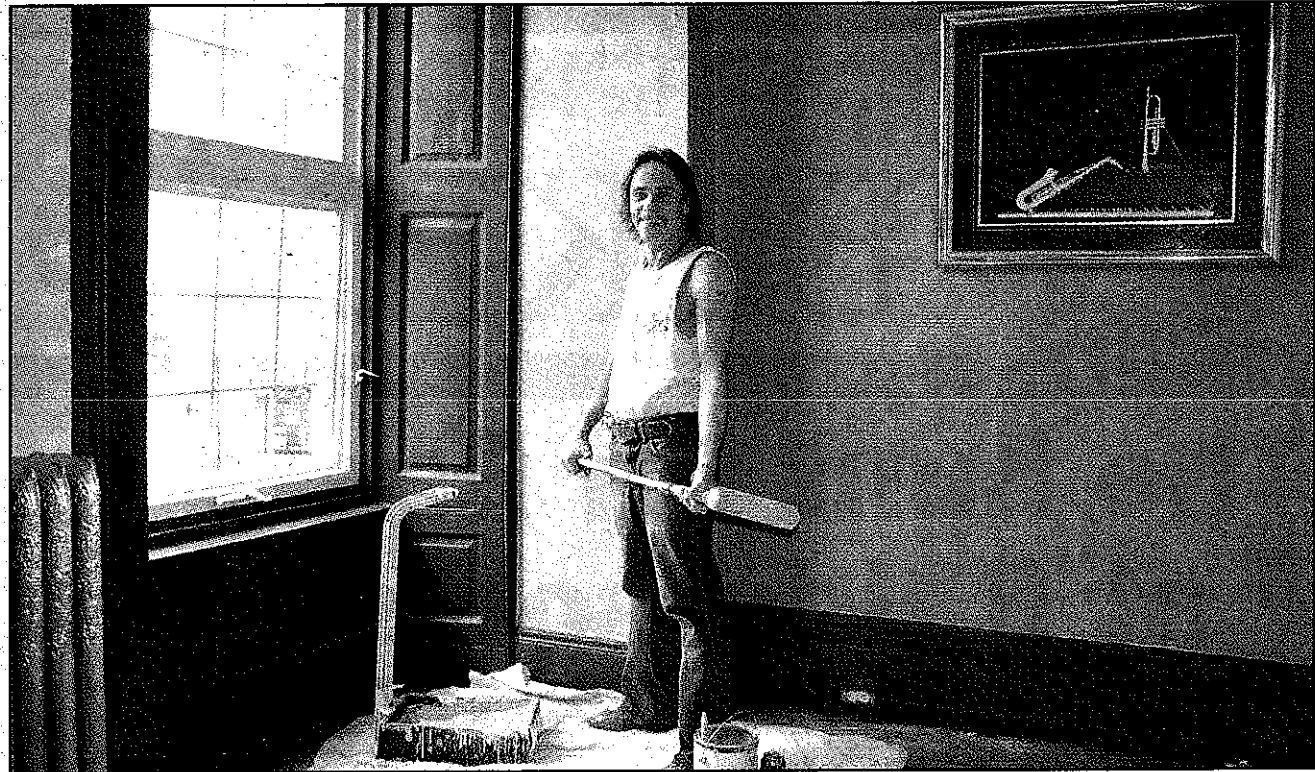


PHOTO BY KRISTA JOHNSTON

Paul Gagne is in the midst of renovating the historic apartments at 35 Gore St. E. The four three-bedroom units will soon be restored to their original state but with a few unique accents, such as vibrant Spanish colours and mosaic tile.

