



This elegant bathroom
was previously a
dilapidated office.

Creative Reuse

Transforming big problems into work-friendly,
historically sensitive spaces.



Above: Peggy added this stained-glass window during the home's renovation.

WHEN THEY BOUGHT THE E.R. ROGERS MANSION IN STEILACOOM, WASHINGTON,

Peggy Fraychineaud Gross and her husband, Jeff Gross, knew there would be some big problems to solve. They soon found that transforming the structure from a restaurant back into one of their town's historic treasures would require more than anyone could have anticipated. From a new foundation to clever ways to preserve and update the rooms, we hope you'll be inspired as you follow their story.

THE PROPER FOUNDATION

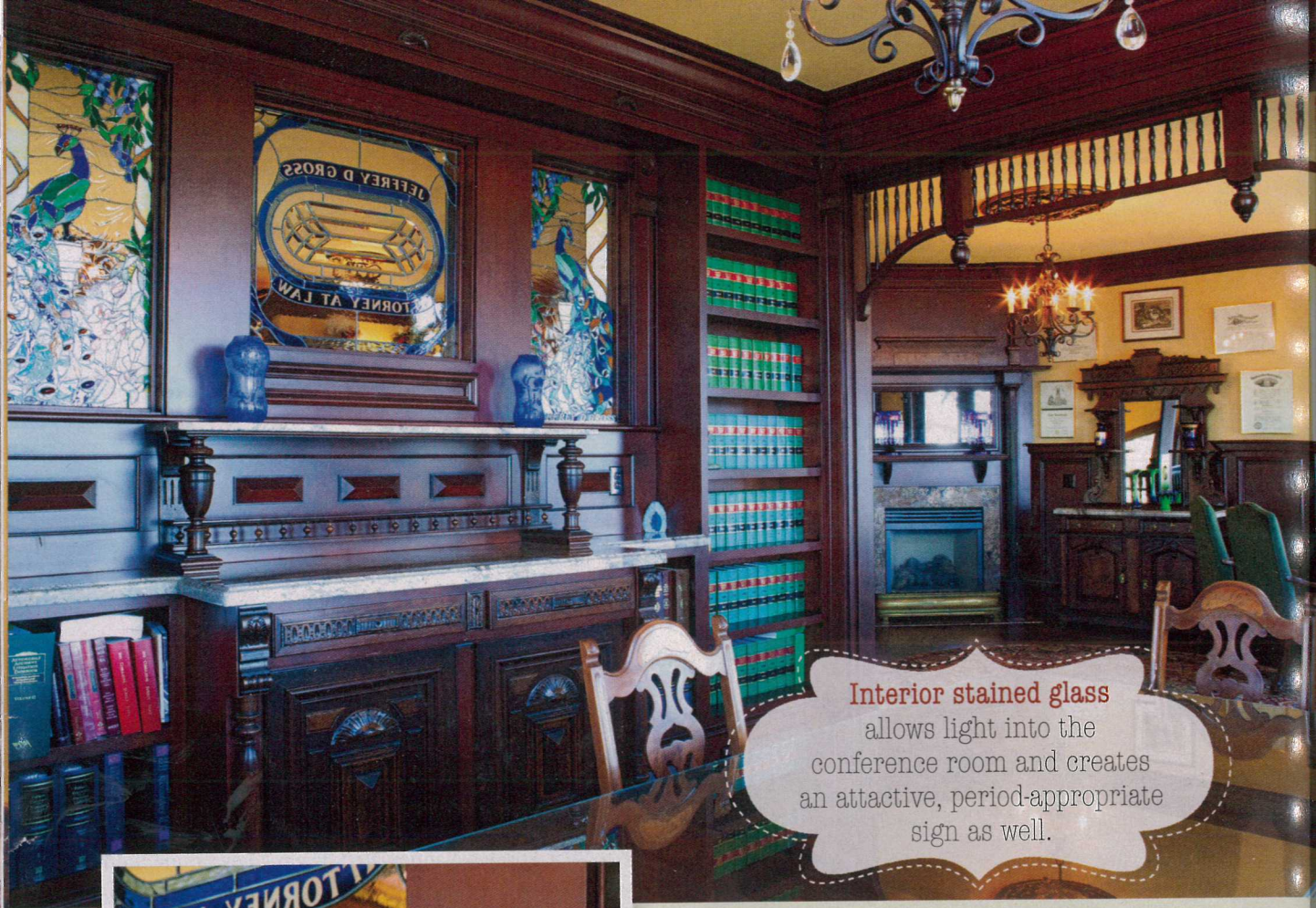
Problem: "We were aware when we bought the building that the back-porch floor was pretty slanted downward toward the east side of the building," the couple says. They discovered that the porch never had any foundation poured under it when the previous owners dry-walled it in the late 1970s as part of the restaurant's kitchen and dishwasher area.

"Much of the existing foundation was crumbling; if this house had not been built on clay soil, it would probably have fallen down," Peggy says.

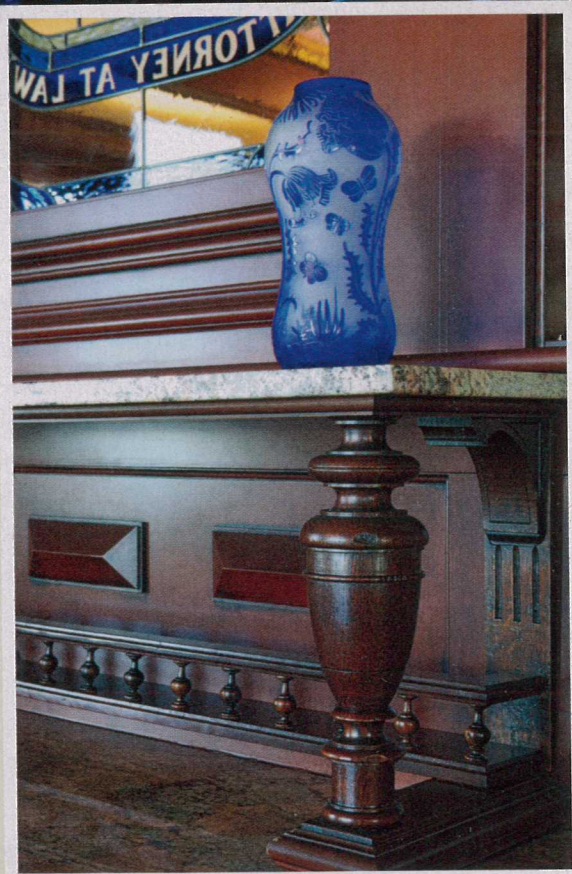
Solution: In order to maintain the structure, the entire back of the house, as well as the basement, had to be rebuilt and a new foundation poured.



BY REBECCA ITTNER • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF WOLFF



Interior stained glass allows light into the conference room and creates an attractive, period-appropriate sign as well.



MAKE ROOM FOR WORK

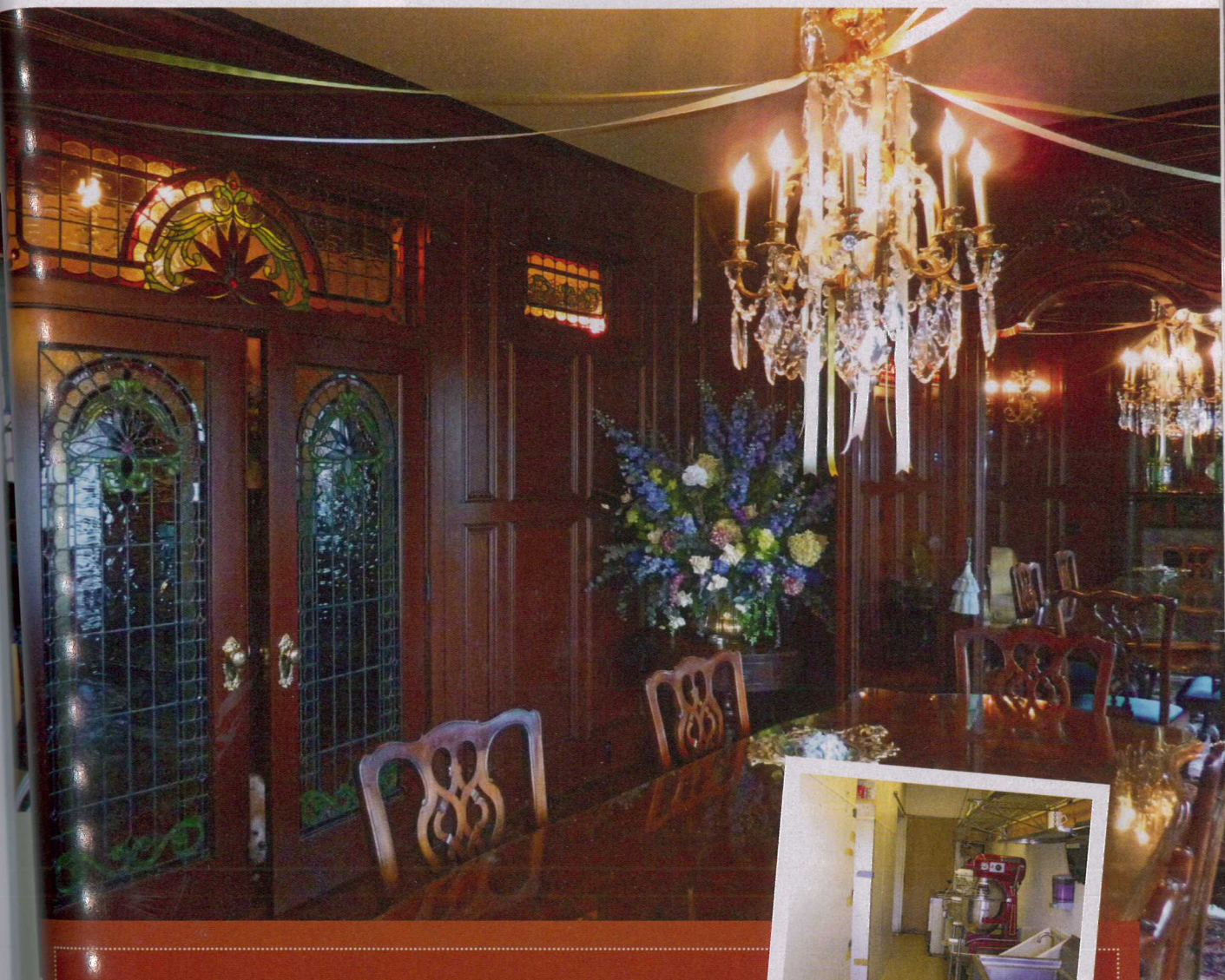
Problem: Due to commercial zoning restrictions, the couple's primary use of the mansion is for their legal offices; they each have their own separate law practices. It took courage and resolve to envision beautifully renovated rooms instead of the dining areas, commercial kitchen, dishwasher room and full bar that existed when Peggy and Jeff bought the home.

Solution: Once the structure was sound, the couple worked with their architect and builder to configure historically accurate spaces that would serve the needs of a busy, modern law office.

Peggy and her team of experts looked creatively at the exquisite spaces, while determined to honor the home's original design, from floor to ceiling. "I have a great appreciation for the Victorian period of architecture and furniture, and have been collecting Victorian furniture and architectural pieces since the early 1990s," Peggy says.

The couple's fine attention to detail throughout every aspect of the E.R. Rogers mansion renovation makes their house a worthy example of how to beautifully preserve a historic home. ❀

SEE RESOURCES, PAGE 94.



OFFICE AND CONFERENCE ROOM

- 1 Create a tasteful, inviting design to honor the historic space.

In what was once the upper deck and bar of the restaurant are Jeff's office and adjoining conference room. Now these rooms are a study in masculine grace with deep woods and mellow blues. Legal tomes covered in shades of cream and blue fill the shelves, lending the conference room a quiet elegance.

In addition to the beautiful paintings and antique paintings throughout the mansion, Peggy's talents are evident in the light fixtures that she has customized to each room. "I love chandeliers (including making them) and portrait paintings—both of which were very popular in the Victorian era," Peggy says.

- 2 Utilize existing furnishings in creative ways.

A large antique sideboard Peggy had acquired years before was repurposed. During the construction of the conference room Peggy could see how it would be a perfect addition to the space. First the sideboard was reconfigured to fit the height of the room, and then it was built into the wall. The piece is so large that it takes prominence in both rooms, as the opposite side of the sideboard is now part of the wall in the adjoining office (see opposite page).

To provide additional work/display space, Peggy had a large granite shelf built into the sideboard; this shelf goes through the wall so it's accessible to both rooms. Rolling cabinets were built to match the antique piece and provide attractive, much-needed storage space for legal files.



Right: In the home's previous incarnation as a restaurant, the wall area would have been the bartender's domain.

KITCHEN AND BATHROOM

- 1 Decorating details provide a level of sophistication to match the home's architecture.

Down the hall from Jeff's office is the second-floor bathroom. Looking at this elegant little room, it's hard to fathom that it was once a dilapidated office (see page 26).

- 2 Maintaining a high level of quality craftsmanship.

Since the mansion is the couple's law office, the new kitchen was built to simple—but not cut-rate—standards. In what was once the dishwasher room, the little kitchen received the same expert craftsmanship for the cabinets and storage spaces as the other rooms in the mansion. Peggy also made sure to include top-quality countertops as well as old-fashioned-style fixtures to complete the proper aesthetic (right).



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