



We're Peachy Keen on this Northside Victorian

March 2018 | Lisa Murtha | 0 Comments

Lisa Meeks didn't buy this 1885 Northside house because it was cute. She didn't buy it because she saw potential in it, either. "I did it," she says, "as defensive neighboring."



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY EMILY BUZEK VALENTINO / COMEY & SHEPHERD

Meeks, a developer and Northside resident, watched alongside concerned neighbors for years as the property deteriorated so badly it ended up on the city of Cincinnati's demolition list. After a wholesaler bought it,

Meeks took a tour. “You could see daylight through the roof,” she says, and all the home’s contents—papers, clothing, furniture—had been “rained on for six years straight.” The plumbing had been stripped out and sold. The interior floors were “so rotted it felt like you were walking on carpet.”

Undeterred, Meeks—a civil rights lawyer who has rehabbed 50 properties since founding her own company, Rock Island Realty, a decade ago—won a bidding war, bought the property, and brought in her construction team to rebuild the entire structure. “It took a full year,” says Meeks, “but we replaced every joist, every subfloor—every piece.”



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY EMILY BUZEK VALENTINO / COMEY & SHEPHERD

Today the home, which was sale pending at press time, is better than new, with a sunny, open first floor plan that includes a stylish granite-clad kitchen, two wood-burning fireplaces, and a new first floor powder room. It also has three bedrooms, including a third floor master suite with easy access to a finished rooftop deck. On every floor, the finishes—all hand-picked by Meeks—are standouts, especially new, period-appropriate tiles in bathrooms and on fireplace hearths.



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The home's revamped interior isn't its only selling point; outside, Meeks had the structure painted a cheery shade of peach to complement the restored, white gingerbread-clad front porch. With the help of NEST—Northsiders Engaged in Sustainable Transformation—she also acquired a vacant, rear-adjointing lot and combined the two parcels. Now the home includes a cement parking pad and good-sized yard—coveted greenspace in an otherwise urban (and very walkable) neighborhood, which the new homeowners will undoubtedly enjoy this spring. And to think it all began with defensive neighboring.



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