

Historic Kinsman house on display after renovations

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KINSMAN

Extensive renovations to Kinsman's historical Dr. Peter Allen House began two years ago, and during that time, townsfolk and passers-by have watched the process unfold with awe and curiosity.

Throughout the restoration, owners Dick and Rhonda Thompson spared no expense in updating and preserving the handsome Federal-style home.

Now, during an open house from 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday, the public finally can see the amazing transformation as they familiarize themselves with the brand-new Peter Allen Inn and Event Center.

The open house will feature cookies, refreshments and an outdoor tent.

Though the doors to the inn and event center cannot open officially for business until the completion of the Kinsman sanitary sewer project, which is expected to occur sometime during the next six months, Dick Thompson said he wants to spread the message to the community and beyond that renovations are complete and the new venture has been established.

"The event center will be available for small weddings, showers, reunions, business meetings and other occasions, and the inn offers two guest rooms," he said. "We are aware that people in our community are anxious to see it. This house is important for several reasons. It is important because the Allen family were a historically significant family of physicians.

"It is important because it was constructed by local builder Willis Smith, who also constructed other notable local buildings such as the Kinsman Presbyterian Church. And it is important because it is an outstanding example of architecture. Architecture buffs come here just to admire the very ornate front facade of the home," he said.

The front of the home has Greek Revival and Adamesque columns, swags and tassel motifs. In William Campan's book "Architecture of the Western Reserve 1800-1900," the house is praised as not being "surpassed in detail by any other house in the Western Reserve."

The Thompsons purchased the home, which was built in 1821, eight years ago because of its historical significance and then worked on determining a purpose for it.

"Many people suggested a bed and breakfast, but since we only had two bedrooms, we decided to also transform the property into an event center," Thompson explained.

The Thompsons were extremely sensitive to preserving the originality of the house during the renovation process.

“We reverted to the original layout of the home. The only changes we created in the original house were the two private baths in the two upstairs guest rooms,” he said. “We also added a large addition to the rear of the home.”

The interior is a blend of historical magnificence and sleek, state-of-the-art modernity. Original woodwork and early 1800s fireplaces blend seamlessly with modern touches such as a security-camera system, sound system, Wi-Fi and sprinkler system.

The home’s original ash floors have been sanded and refinished to gleaming perfection; original panes of wavy glass grace updated windows; custom-made draperies and bed covers adorn the guest rooms, which are beautifully furnished; and original woodwork inspires awe and admiration in every room.

“The woodwork is unusual because it changes from room to room,” Thompson noted. “Usually, the woodwork in the interior of a historical home remains the same throughout.”

The mantel in the front parlor is perhaps the most-spectacular example of the home’s original woodwork. Sunburst medallions, reeded double columns and diamond detailing make the mantel an exquisite example of early 1800s craftsmanship.

The prized mantel and accompanying woodwork actually was removed from the home during the early 1900s and placed in another home that belonged to the Allen family.

The Peter Allen house’s previous owner, the late Alice Blaemire, went to great lengths to get the mantel and woodwork returned and succeeded in 1954. Blaemire was a well-known member of the community, and many Kinsman residents recall how she hosted dinners at the Allen House and was passionate about the home’s history.

Stratton Creek Wood Works LLC of Kinsman constructed a mantel that is an exact duplicate to the original mantel in the front parlor. This duplicate mantel is the focal point of Heritage Hall, an impressive banquet room that seats 70 and is part of the home’s large rear addition.

The Thompsons also added a commercial kitchen to the rear of the home, as well as a spacious outdoor patio area they call the Stone Court Yard. The patio seats 50 to 70 people and features a gas fire pit and large blocks of antique sandstone salvaged from both a historical home in nearby Mesopotamia and a circa-1897 railroad trestle.

The lower level of the rear addition also includes a room called the Kinsman Tavern. This rugged space evokes a public atmosphere and features hand-hewn, salvaged barn beams and brick arches. It offers a full-service bar and will seat about 25 to 30 people.

One interesting note about the brick arches (which are part of the home’s original basement) – legend has it this is where Dr. Peter Allen stored cadavers during his days as a practicing physician.

“Peter Allen practiced medicine his entire life and used cadavers to enhance his understanding of human anatomy, which was valuable knowledge during surgical operations,” Thompson said. “Peter Allen’s son, Dudley Allen was also a doctor, and Dudley

Allen's son, Peter Dudley Allen, was also a doctor who taught medicine at Oberlin College and became a leading surgeon in Cleveland."

Visitors also can see Dr. Peter Allen's original office, which was added to the home sometime after 1821. Here the doctor stored medicinal instruments and dried herbs, which he used in homemade compounds and prescribed to patients.

"The house is full of fascinating history," Thompson said. "It is really a treasure in our community."

New innkeepers and event managers Mary and Ed Boyer were intrigued by the house's rich history when they accepted their positions and relocated to Kinsman from Conway, Ark.

"We are very excited to be here, and we are looking forward to meeting people from the community during the upcoming open house," Mary Boyer said.

The Boyers live in a lower-level apartment that is part of the home's rear addition. For information concerning event pricing and room rates, contact Mary Boyer at 330-355-2100.

The Peter Allen Inn and Event Center is at 8581 State St.

See more at: <http://www.vindy.com/news/2015/sep/23/historic-home/#sthash.YjqZpenA.dpuf>