

Builder puts his stamp on home renovation

By Bill Fonda
bfonda@cnc.com

ORLEANS-Trevor Kurz has big plans for the former Joseph Mayo house at 187 Main St. in Orleans, which was built in 1850 and briefly served as a combination store and post office.

“When it’s done, it’s going to look like a little dollhouse,” said Kurz, who bought the house in July.

Right now, it looks more like something from “This Old House.” Yellow tape keeps visitors off the porch, and the front door is missing. Inside, the crash of a sledgehammer is enough to rattle anyone who is not ready for it.

But even in the disarray, it’s the small details, such as the tin ceiling, that reveal Kurz’s ambition.

“It’s hard to say, but I think that’s the original ceiling from when the post office was here,” he said.

When the front door is installed, it will be the door from the post office, which had been moved to the side of the building. The new trim was based on that of other Greek Revival houses in the neighborhood.

“We spent two weeks researching the style,” he said. “It’s a huge amount of work. Everything is a custom cut. Every single angle had to be figured out. It’s difficult.”

Kurz wants to replace the cedar shingles with cedar clapboard and install a seashell driveway.

“Pavement doesn’t reflect the Cape Cod look very much,” he said.

When the work is done, possibly in December, Kurz plans to live in the house and rent it out during the summer. Normally, he buys houses to remodel and then sell or rent.

Kurz hopes the house’s future includes a business. He and Kay Bashaw had been running an antique business in the outbuilding, but stopped after neighbors protested.

Jeff Carlson, owner of the Real Estate Co. on Main Street, helped collect



Signatures for the protest position. He said the town bylaw is clear-if a business is abandoned for two or more years, which the former business was, it has to go before the zoning board of appeals before re-opening.

“Plus, it was a retail business in a residential zone, which is not allowed,” he said.

Several homes on Main Street also contain businesses, and Carlson said he is not opposed to them.

“In fact, where I live, there’s a person across the street who offers music lessons,” he said.

Kurz said on Monday that he planned to file a permit request with the board of appeals that day. Since he bought the property directly from the former owner, he believes Carlson may have been upset he could not get in on the deal.

Carlson, however, said that is not the case. “If that were true, I’d be upset about an awful lot of sales that go on,” he said.

Above: Trevor Kurz and his new house at 187 Main St., the site of the former East Orleans post office.

Right: Kurz holds the door of the former post office, complete with a drop slot for letters, that will serve as the front door of the home.

Below: The tin ceiling adds a touch of antiquity.

