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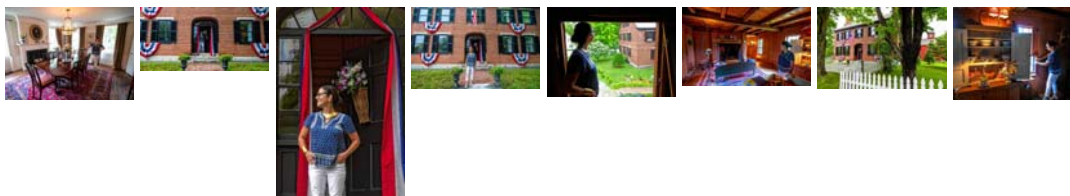
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New owners look to restore Gilmanton's Brick House



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Kim Hurd in the completely renovated dining room at their Brickhouse home in Gilmanton on Wednesday, July 14, 2021. GEOFF FORESTER—Monitor staff » Buy this Image



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Kim Hurd knew she was undertaking a project – perhaps a crazy one – when she bought an 18th century home in February, the night before a Nor'easter hit. She was unsure if it had running water and knew the pipes were frozen. But at least it had one functioning bathroom. And a fire pit. “A lot of people think we are nuts to do this,” she said. “I’m sure it does take a little bit of craziness to do it.”

But her new home, the Brick House at Four Corners in Gilmanton, has history, stories and a very literal name. Situated on the corner of two cross roads in the center of town, the red brick house was once a key piece in the center of the community.



Within the last two decades, no one has lived in it. Now Hurd is working to refurbish the house for her family, and eventually open a store in the attached barn to welcome the public back to the property.

Red, white and blue decorated the front windows and door, as Hurd and her family celebrated their first Fourth of July in the house. From the outside, the grandiose brick and green lawn hold an elegance. On the inside though, Hurd is at work restoring each room and rebuilding the home.

Some rooms tell a story – the dining room, which is one of three completed, used to be Alice Bean's bedroom. Bean lived in the house in the in the 1800s and was wheelchair bound at the time. Grooves in the doorway, from where her chair used to hit, give notice to that.

When Hurd moved into the house, she was handed bags of binders and photo albums. Turning the pages, yellow sheets that were once white date the history of the house – lists of previous owners, old photos and documents. In one black and white photo, Bean sits outside.

Each room is full of little treasures, from hand carved matchstick details along the walls, to old mercury glass door knobs. When Hurd was cleaning a wooden shelf installation in the dining room, she noticed two small letters carved in the center of the salmon paint: HP.

“We keep discovering things that you don’t always see,” she said.

Henry Page hand carved the wooden details in the house. A long time Gilmanton resident, Page died in 2019. But his legacy lives on through antique homes, like the Brick House.

And Page's name will live on when his son Rick makes his own stake in the house. Hurd plans to install a new kitchen in the keeping room, a large wooden room with a brick fireplace. Rick will help with the renovation in a house his father used to work on.

Currently, a couch Henry made by hand sits in front of the fireplace. Rick gifted it to the new owners.

Furniture like Henry's couch tell their own story, which is what Hurd loves. To add to the narrative of the home, Hurd is sourcing pieces from antique shows across the country.

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In fact, the Brick House was once an antique store, where Hurd used to shop.

“That’s the irony,” she said. “There are pieces I moved back in here.”

Most people in Gilmanton seem to have a memory of the Brick House, Hurd has found. Whether they shopped there previously or once rang the doorbell on Halloween.

To hear these stories, and share her own restoration project, Hurd created a Facebook page for the house. It has over 900 followers.

“I was trying to collect and call information on it,” she said.

With each comment, she finds another connection to the Brick House.

“They’re not my stories, they are their stories, but it helps make the connection between us,” she said.

This is not the first time the Brick House has undergone a restoration project. In the 1980s, Douglas Towle, a Gilmanton resident, deemed the house to be his next project. Towle has restored over 20 homes in the town.

He now lives up the road from Hurd and her family, coming over frequently to be involved with the latest renovation. Hurd makes him dinner in return for his expertise.

Towle took his time with details in his restoration – he rebuilt the ell portion of the house from the ground up. And to ensure the interior still had an old, weathered look, he purposely left the roof off of the ell one winter so that snowfall would stain the ceiling.

To decorate two upstairs bedrooms, Towle also commissioned artist David Wiggings to paint murals across the walls. One features Gilmanton, where Hurd was able to play her own game of “Where’s Waldo” and spot the Brick House in the painting.


These are all details Hurd plans to keep as she refurnishes and repurposes the house. Eventually, she hopes people can come to her storefront and see the restoration first hand. In the meantime they can follow the updates from her and photos online.

“The feeling I am getting from the community is that they are really happy to see some loving on the place,” she said. “It’s a long haul but I am really super excited about it.”

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