

NORTHERN Home & Cottage

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mid-century modern

Architect Nick White brings
TRADITIONAL STYLE home

A photograph of a white porch with columns and a hanging fern. The porch features several white columns and a white railing. A large, lush green fern is hanging from the porch ceiling. The background is filled with green foliage, suggesting a garden or wooded area. The overall scene is bright and airy, with natural light filtering through the leaves.

The White House

FOR PETOSKEY
ARCHITECT NICK WHITE,
INSPIRATION BEGINS
AT HOME.

TEXT BY PATTY
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PHOTOGRAPHS BY
BRIAN CONFER





AS A YOUNG ARCHITECT,

Nick White and his wife, Betsy, were invited to the home of a couple that went to their church. The Whites were captivated with the gracious late Victorian, built in 1900, with its wraparound porch. They also loved its setting in a historic, uptown Petoskey neighborhood filled with other Victorian and Arts and Crafts homes and big old maples. With three young children, the Whites couldn't help noticing the spacious bedrooms and how the home was in walking distance of the local school. But most of all the house was fluent in Petoskey's historic vernacular—from its white oak floors to its quarter-sawn white oak beams. Nick, who was just beginning to design period homes, knew the Victorian had lessons to teach him.

BELOW, FROM LEFT: Nick's vibrant collection of Cuban street art was amassed during seven trips to that country, where he has helped rebuild aging churches through a mission with his church. The living room's serene gray-green walls make art pop. The picture above the fireplace is by Petoskey artist David Pickett. **OPPOSITE:** The tranquil sunroom.

The Whites asked the homeowners to call if they ever thought of selling. The couple said certainly—in five to ten years. But nine months later they changed their minds and called. The moral, says Nick, is never be afraid to ask. "When someone knows they can sell something they love to someone who will love it like they do, it makes it easier to let it go," he says.

Twenty-three years later, the Whites' children are grown. Nick is a prominent architect acclaimed for his neo-Victorian designs, and the family still cherishes the home. Moreover, the level of workmanship in details such as hand-cut millwork and leaded glass interior doors and windows are a constant source of inspiration for Nick's work. Case in point: the oak-paneled undersides of the steps in the home's lovely main staircase. "I do that a lot in of my homes now," the architect says.





Tasteful Redo

After years living with the old kitchen, the Whites turned to the designers at Kitchen & Co. in Petoskey to help with a complete renovation. With the dust settled, antique-finish white and dark-stained cherry cupboards mix with white bead-board wainscoting and commercial-grade appliances. The center island is topped with dark granite, and the ceiling above it uses a piece of tin reclaimed from Nick's



Given their regard for their home's integrity, the Whites left the traditional floor plan intact. It begins with a small but elegant foyer laid with Arts and Crafts tiles, opens into a formal living room flanked by a smaller parlor (now Nick's study) and sunroom, and wends to an elegant dining room that is oak paneled three-quarters of the way to the ceiling. Features like grand 9½-foot ceilings and three fireplaces inlaid with original Pewabic tiles, round out the first floor's blend of 1900's warmth and formality.

The three upstairs bedrooms, connected by a hallway so generous it feels like a sitting room, are a charming composition of attic-style angles, beautiful windows and yet another fireplace. And the hidden backstairs to the kitchen, used by the maid in another era, are as much practical for kids and grandkids as they are secret and storybook feeling.

Any renovations the couple has made to the home have come with a caveat: "We decided when we moved here that we wouldn't strip anything that was painted, and we wouldn't paint anything that was original wood, because it was too big a house to get carried away with," Betsy says. With that rule in mind, they painted the living room's plaster walls a serene green-gray and filled it with antique furniture and rugs handed down from their families.

As with any aged home, the Whites have had their share of leaky pipes and other issues. Yet its sturdiness endures. It's so well built that you can't hear the traffic on the street, and even at 5,000 square feet, it isn't expensive to heat.

"I'm never tired of it," Nick says of the house. "The quality of the construction, the detailing, the leaded glass, the fireplaces. It's home." 🏡

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downtown office. The ceiling is lit around the edges of the crown molding with rope lights, giving it an arched feeling. The floor is unglazed porcelain that looks like limestone and holds up well against the Whites' dogs. The overall result is a kitchen that blends seamlessly with the rest of the home.

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