



Callan Castle

Zoom



1 of 10

Photographer: David Christensen Author: Lori Johnston

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Coca-Cola's brand has remained strong through the years, but soft drink magnate Asa Candler's former Inman Park mansion gradually lost its fizz. Its roof, rotting columns and cracked tile on its two-story portico were tarnishing the look of the historic home.

A national search for materials and craftsman to replicate original molding and ornamental details, often by hand, were essential in the painstaking restoration of Callan Castle, which completed construction in 1904 and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

It took Candler two years to build the red brick home in Atlanta's first suburb.

"Inman Park was really a sign of the growth of Atlanta and prosperity," says Judy Mozen, president of Roswell-based Handcrafted Homes, Inc., which completed a year-long restoration of the mansion in 2011. "When people would create a suburb and put lots of money in beautiful houses, it meant 'We're staying, we're established and we believe in Atlanta.'"

But as Inman Park, like other intown neighborhoods, went through a decline in the following decades, even landmarks like Callan Castle began to deteriorate. The damage was overwhelming. Some of the 100-year-old ornamental cornices and corbels disintegrated in Mozen's hands as she tried to remove them from the home in order to reproduce every original detail. The columns also were sinking, threatening the Greek Revival-style portico.

Mysteries popped up during the restoration, notably with the roof. Mozen discovered it was metal, but since the original design was not available, she undertook an extensive search to find someone to

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make the tiles. Three brothers, using an old government press outside of Chicago, created 4,240 pieces of galvanized steel tiles.

Some of the bricks were so soft and fragile that water leaked into the interior walls, requiring Handcrafted to repair the bricks with a special mortar mix and process. Layer after layer of moldings needed to be reproduced to curve around the veranda, while ornamental pieces in a motif similar to ribbons-and-bows were handmade out of rosin.

The biggest disaster was the porch's black-and-white tile, which was uneven and had been filled in with concrete, creating an unsafe and unstable entryway. Mozen's team first tried a slightly larger porcelain tile that horrified them because it looked like the floor of a fast-food restaurant, not a historic home.

Taking a cue from an old Coke slogan, Mozen says she and the homeowner agreed: "We've got to find the real thing." It took three months before they identified a small Arkansas company that could replicate the porcelain tile, snowflakes and Greek key border.

"I loved the idea of restoring the home to its original look," Mozen says. "It's a centerpiece of Atlanta architecture."

RESTORATION Handcrafted Homes, Inc. 505 Boulder Way, Roswell 30075. (770) 642-1010; handcraftedhomes-inc.com

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