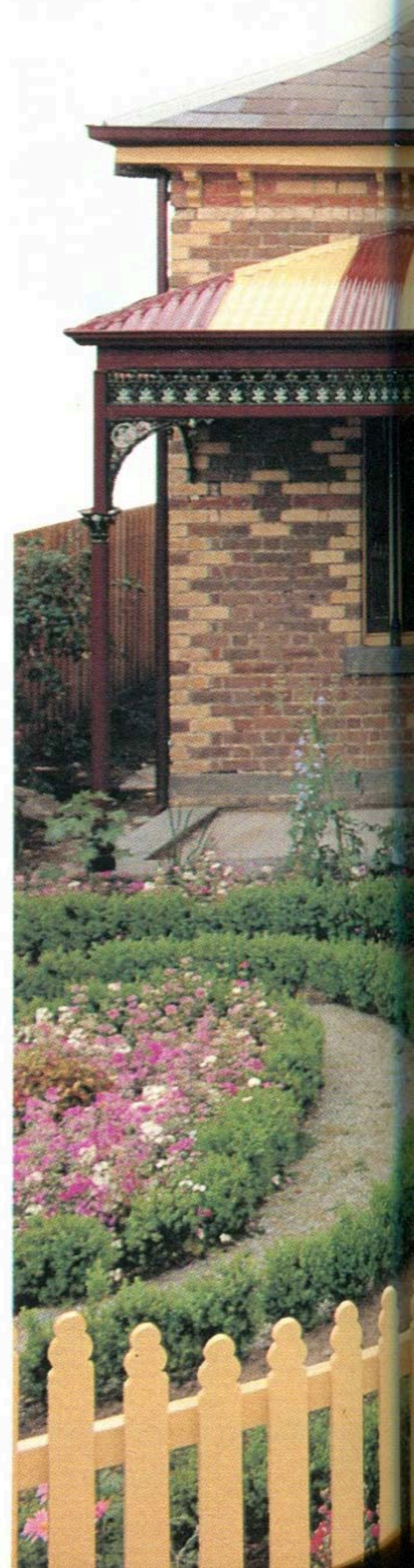


# BACK TO THE

FOR THIS LUCKY  
MELBOURNE  
HOUSE NEW LIFE  
SPRINGS FROM  
THE PATIENT  
UNRAVELLING OF  
THE PAST



**Above:** The shop and dwelling as it was before the Fedorowiczs bought it three years ago. Behind all the 1950s-style cement render they found the original tuck-pointed bricks.

**Above, right:** Jackie and "Sam" Fedorowicz in the reception area of their newly restored Victorian building. Now they can relax and enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Some of the most interesting and inspiring stories *Home Beautiful* comes across are about those energetic couples who take on the worst house in the street and painstakingly restore it to its former glory.

These stories are interesting, not just because of the sheer hard work involved, but because of the often long and frustrating searches for missing pieces of lacework or special paint colors, and then the final result which is rewarding both personally and financially.

This story is no exception. In fact it's a truly inspiring story of a restoration that became a passion.

Like many people, Jackie and Andrew (nicknamed Sam) Fedorowicz didn't plan on undertaking a full restoration. They were looking for new office premises for Sam, an architect skilled in designing modern houses rather than restoring old ones, when they found an old and derelict 1888 shop and dwelling. Although the building was in poor condition and quite drastically altered on the outside, inside it was in original condition. Jackie and Sam fell in love with it and decided to restore it to its former glory.

# FUTURE



**The building as it is today, a well known Essendon landmark which motorists slow down to admire. The building is now a fine example of a Victorian shop and dwelling with almost all the original details carefully restored.**

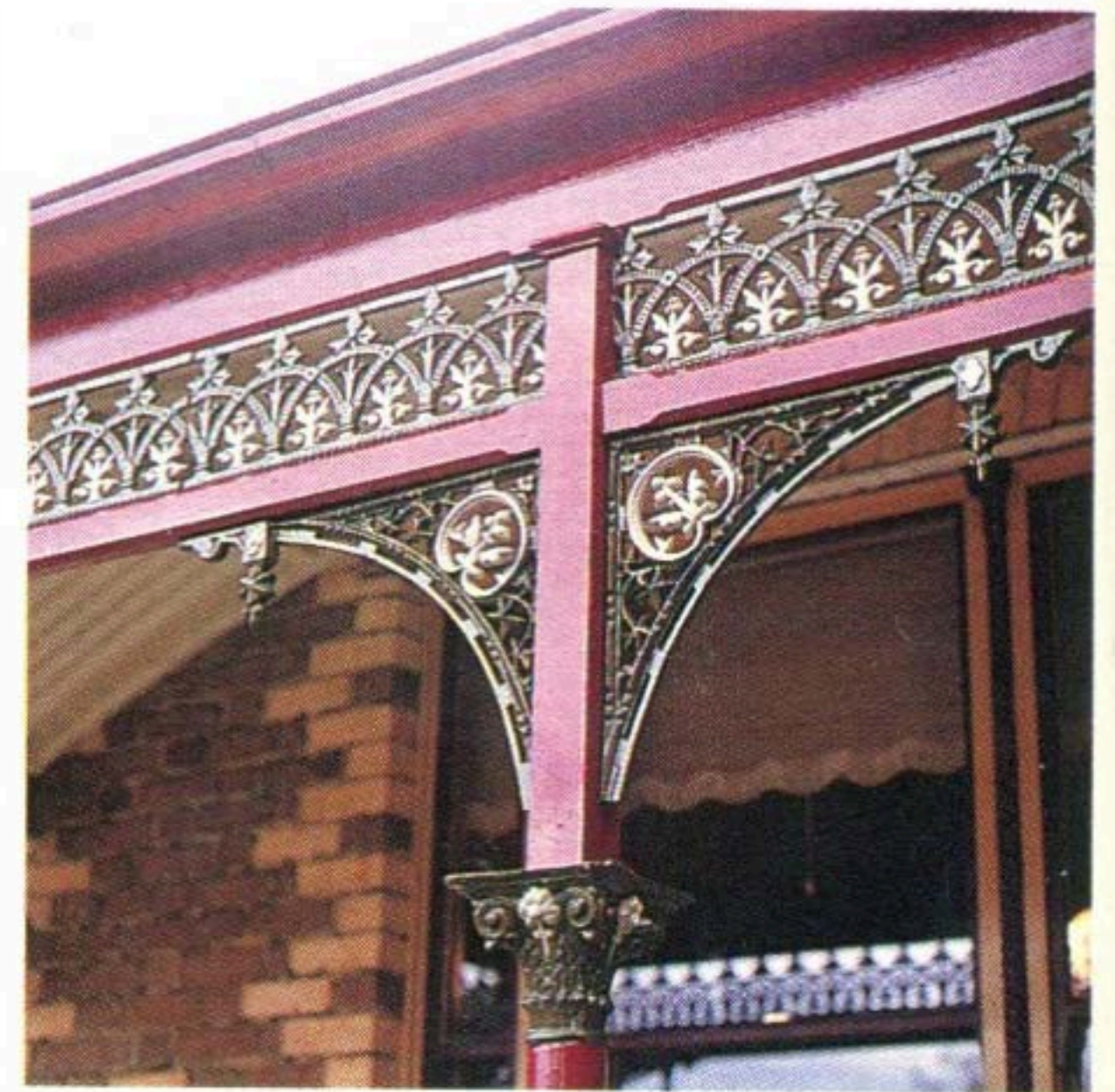
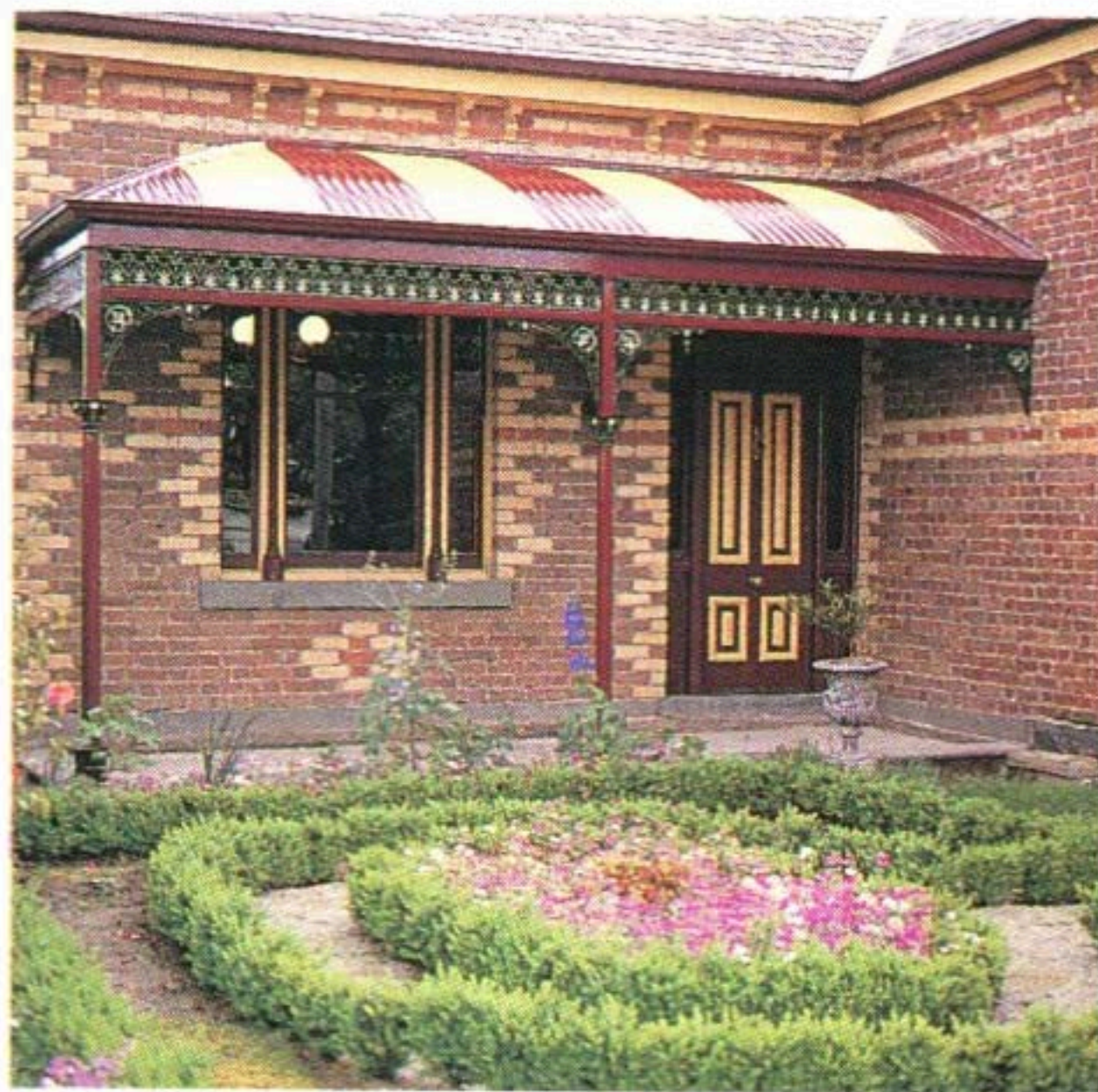


**Above:** Although in original condition, the hallway before restoration had crumbling plaster and rising damp.

**Above, right:** The now fully restored hallway highlights the building's Victorian details. Carefully researched use of wall coverings and paint have created this dramatic transformation.

**Right:** The garden has also been "renovated" and now is typically Victorian with carefully planted miniature box hedges. A landscape gardener friend, Mark Bolitho, helped the Fedorowiczs create the pretty garden.

**Far right:** The original lacework was unearthed in the back garden and then the design matched by a modern-day tradesman. The traditional paint colors have been used to carefully highlight the pretty pattern in the lacework.



The first year was spent making it habitable. The rising damp had to be cured, holes in the ceiling mended and crumbling plaster replaced. The shop part of the building had been used for 70 years by a boot repairer, so there were boot tacks in the walls and all kinds of other minor repair work that had to be attended to before any real restoration could take place.

In search of information on restoration, Jackie and Sam scoured home shows for assistance, but without success. Eventually they began work armed only with Ian

Evans' *Old House Catalogue*. Now, three years later, information on restoring Victorian buildings is readily available, with many shops specialising in Victorian and Edwardian fittings.

However Jackie and Sam "listened" to their building and surprisingly the building actually helped them with their restoration. The whole process became one of finding clues and piecing together bits here and there to discover what was originally where.

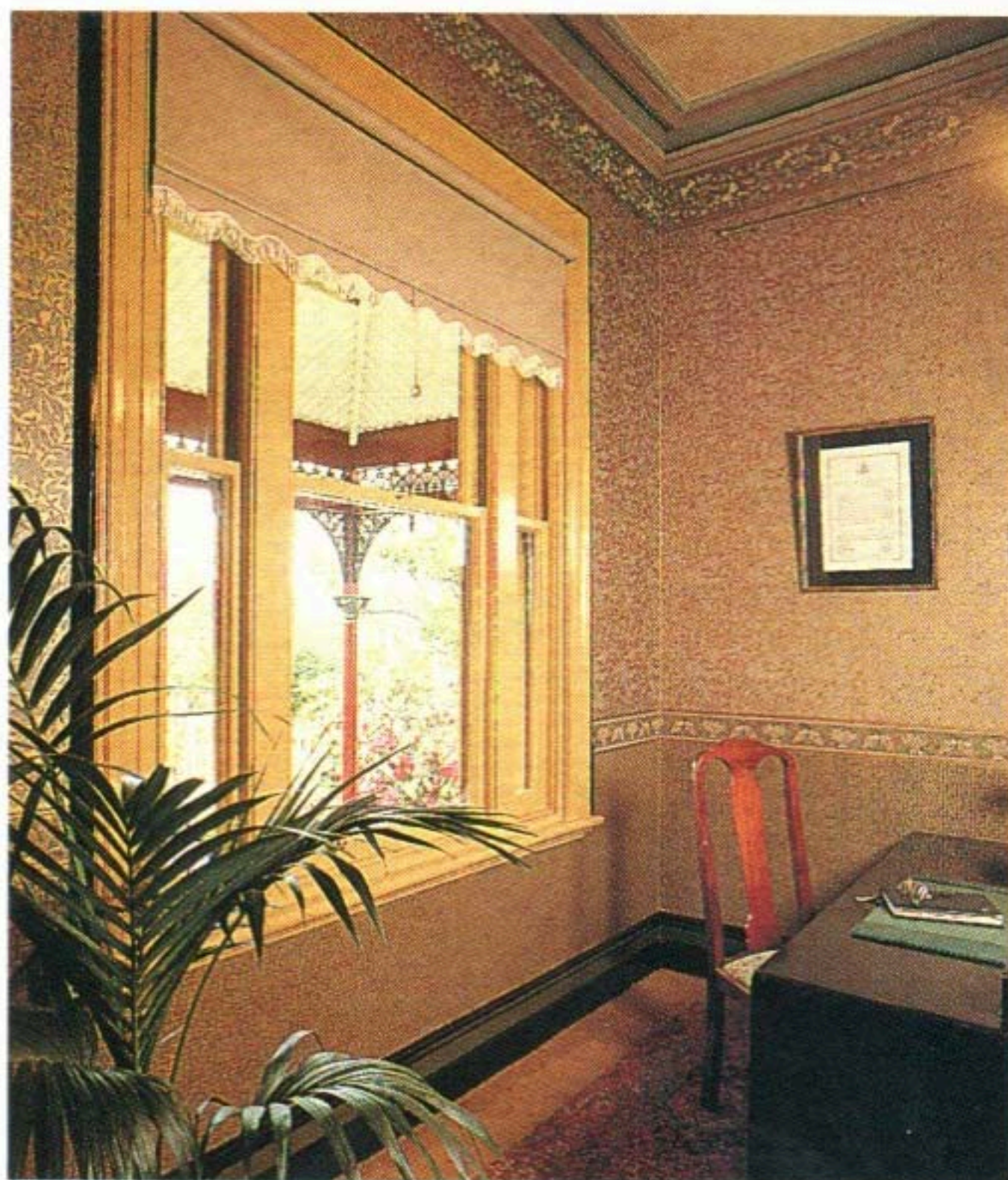
Jackie tells of the day they dug up the cement in the back garden and found the



**Above:** The bathroom was in a very sorry state when the Fedorowiczs bought the property. However Jackie and Sam persevered with remarkable results.

**Above, right:** The bathroom is now up to the standards set in the rest of the building.

**Right:** Sam's office is also beautifully decorated with no detail overlooked. This room has a delightful view out to the new veranda and the pretty garden.



As work progressed on the house, the more curious Jackie and Sam became about its history. They even tried to contact a relative of the original owner in hope of finding an early photograph. Eventually they found a grandson who showed them a photograph taken in the 1920s, when the house was still in original condition, apart from the picket fence which had been cut to the style of that period. After looking at the photograph, the most rewarding thing for the Fedorowiczs was that everything they had done to the exterior was exactly as it had been originally.

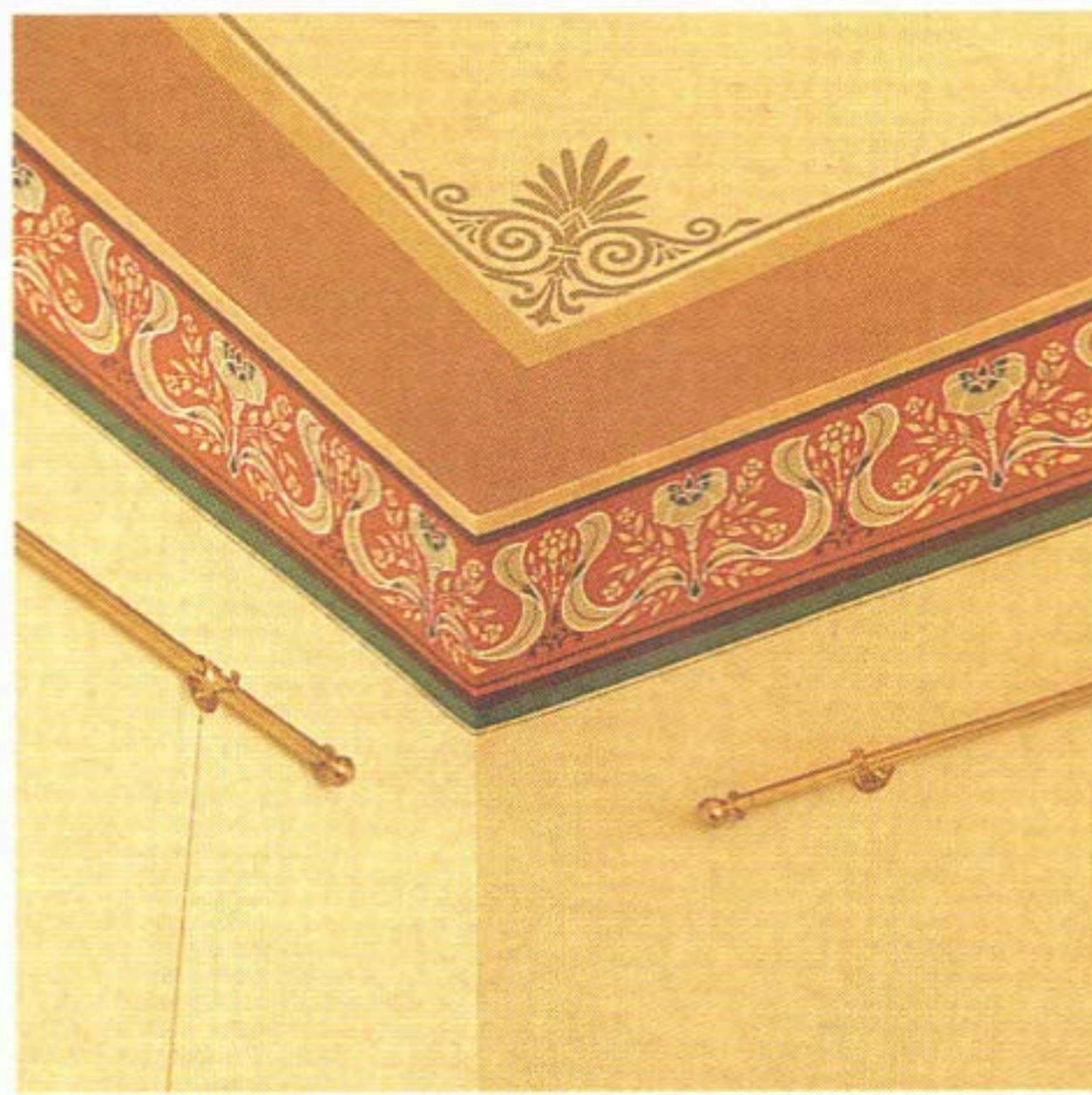
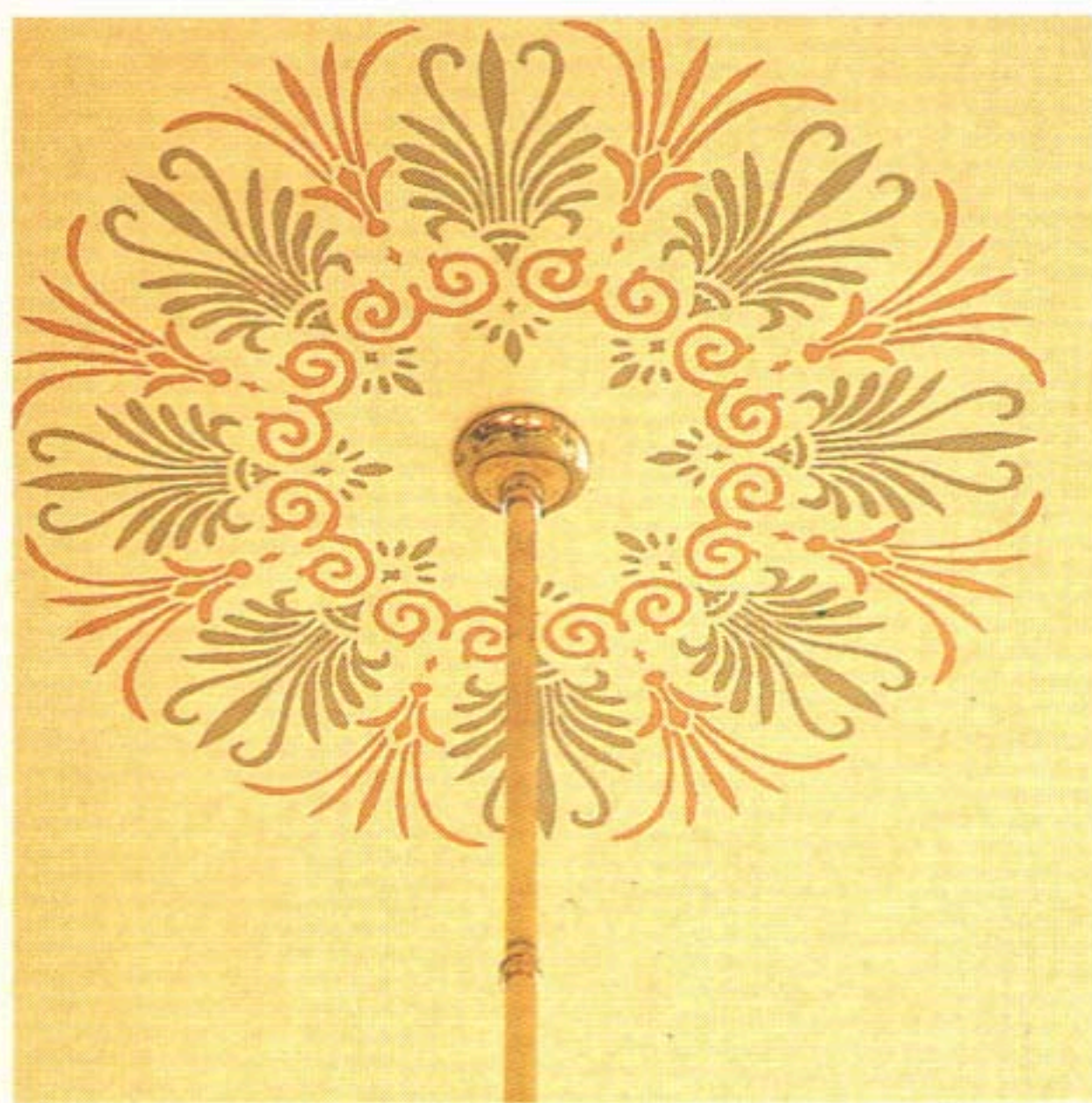
The restored building has adapted easily to a functional 1980s-style office. The staff love their rich surroundings, and although only partially furnished with antique furniture, the drawing boards and computers don't look out of place in the restored building.

For Jackie and Sam the past three years have been hard work but, both agree, well worth the effort. They have broadened their knowledge of the area's history as well as adding another dimension to their architectural practice.

**Story:** Fiona Whittle-Langham

**Pictures:** Gary Chowanetz

Jackie and Andrew (Sam) Fedorowicz can be contacted on Tel: (03) 375-2788.



**Above, left: The entrance foyer is now a waiting room for clients, where there is plenty for them to admire in the beautifully finished surroundings. A specially made reception desk matches the Victorian decor and hides the computer.**

**Above: When the couple came across the building it was in a rundown state and very damp, so much so that many a less-keen renovator would have turned their back on it.**

**Left: Details of the ceiling show examples of Jackie and Sam's stencilling skills, matched with a traditional wallpaper. Color scrapes were made in all the rooms to find the original paintwork; original wallpaper samples were also found and closely matched with reproduction wallpapers. Extensive use of stencilling was a less expensive way of decorating.**

tesselated tiles from the front terrace. That started the whole family digging up the garden in search of more clues. "The back yard looked like a mine field," Jackie says, "but it was all worthwhile because we found the large pieces of bluestone capping from the front veranda as well." Further examination of the old chook-shed revealed that it was built with timber from the veranda. In strange and mysterious ways the building continued to assist the Fedorowiczs with their restoration. When it was time to choose a design for the front

fence they found an original picket under the house to copy. The same with the lacework. Jackie and Sam were despairing over what lace pattern to choose when Jackie's garden fork unearthed some original lacework in the corner of the yard. Inside, extensive use of stencilling became a less expensive way of decorating some of the ceilings, at the same time adding the Fedorowiczs' own touch to the interior of the building. The fireplaces have been restored in each room and a totally restored Victorian bathroom is now a feature of the building. ▶