

# Feature Home

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Photos Submitted



## Part 1 - FLIP IT:

# The Deconstruction

If you were told that a house you were considering purchasing was a tear down, would you still buy it? I'm guessing not.

For most people doing cosmetic renovations like putting on a fresh coat of paint, installing some new flooring or adding new kitchen cabinets is likely very manageable. But, I think most of us have watched enough *Holmes on Homes* to know that the more serious the renovations - structural changes like adding or removing walls, re-drywalling or foundation work often leads to an even bigger project, which usually requires a bigger budget.

Geoff Gregoire, owner of Contractor's Corner, doesn't shy away from houses that some would consider tear downs. In fact, the company just recently purchased a house in Brandon that had been on the market for a quite some time and was actually advertised as a lot for sale.



It was one of those houses that was scaring away buyers, but it wasn't because of the size, layout or location. It was the evidence of water damage that had folks lining up their next appointment to view other houses on the market.



“Everyone said it was a knock down and it was listed as a lot. As soon as I looked at it, I realized that it was close to the train tracks, so there’s no way you can knock this down because you’ll never be allowed to rebuild that close to the tracks. When I checked with Brandon Area and Planning they said you have to be a 100 meters from the tracks and this house is within that range, so you’d never be able to build new,” said Geoff.

The project house is at 834-9th Street. It’s a 970 square foot, open-concept bungalow with three bedrooms, two bathrooms and a full-sized basement.

The first step in taking on the renovation was to determine where all the water damage was coming from, but after a quick inspection it was clear to see.

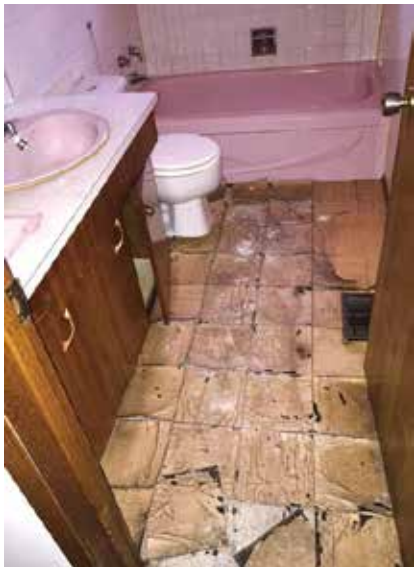
“Water was coming right down through the roof, but there was three feet of snow on it. So, we scraped off the snow and discovered that there was literally three huge holes in the roof. I’m surprised a rodent didn’t find its way into the house. So, to prevent any further damage, we re-sheeted the roof and put on new shingles,” said Geoff.

The house was vacant for some time, but it is unknown as to what the condition of the house was with its previous owners. Geoff said they aren’t sure how long water had been coming in, but it also doesn’t take long for the damage to occur.

With his partner, Dan Manser, and their three employees Geoff said Manitoba Restoration, their restoration business,

works primarily on disaster relief.

“For the most part, Manitoba Restoration works with insurance adjusters to handle disaster relief. This includes mould remediation, asbestos removal, fire, smoke, water damage and sewer back-up cleaning. It’s not fun work and it usually



takes a long time to complete. There are a lot of safety standards to follow, especially with asbestos removal, but the end results are always worth it. It’s hard, labour intensive work, we basically tackle all the dirty jobs that no one else wants to take on,” laughs Geoff.

Their employees are trained and certified and stay up-to-date on safe and proper procedures. They also have all the right equipment to get the jobs done quickly and efficiently.

“If your house floods, you need to get the water out fast. So you need commercial dehumidifiers and air movers. With the ones that we use, we actually put the hoses right into the drain, so we get the water out as quickly as we can. If you have sewer back-up, you can’t just put everything in the dryer to dry, you have to clean it all properly,” Geoff said.

And that’s precisely why the house on 9th Street was an ideal project for Contactor’s Corner and Manitoba Restoration. Once they stopped the water from coming in, they started tearing off the damaged drywall to see

- *Restoration*
- *Disaster Remediation*

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interior designer has some great ideas for design and when all is said and done it will be a desirable, modern home.”

So, if you are in the market for a house and thinking of a fixer up, Geoff said that people shouldn't be shy about asking for a second or third appointment to see the house so that you know exactly what you're getting in to.



exactly what they were up against. What they discovered was a bit of mould in the insulation.

“If we didn't have the restoration company, we wouldn't have been able to take on this project. Just to gut it and clean it out, we likely would have quoted close to \$20,000,” said Geoff. “I still say this is just an extreme cosmetic renovation because we're not really doing any main structural work or adding on. We are taking it right down to the studs and when we're done it'll basically be a new home.”

The Manitoba Restoration team does the tear down and cleaning of the property, then the construction crew from Contractor's Corner will come in and rebuild it. Contractor's Corner has been in business for eight years and is owned by Geoff and his brother, Tim.

“This will probably be one of the biggest flips ever done in Brandon. Mostly because we're taking it right down to the studs. Nowadays to flip a house and make money you can't usually go to that extreme, unless you get it for a really good price.”

Geoff started flipping houses right out of high school and knew when he graduated from Crocus Plains Regional Secondary School that this was the industry for him.

“I based my grade 12 business plan on flipping houses. I'm very much a hands-on type of person and I'm mostly self-taught. If I don't know how to do something I find someone who can teach me,” said Geoff.

“The kitchen and bathroom of the house we're working on will be pretty fancy. Since we don't do a lot of new builds, we use houses like this as our show home. Our in-house

“Some people look at a house once, maybe twice and they're scared to tell the agent they'd like to go through it one more time and bring along one or two people for some advice. Make that second or third appointment and get an experienced carpenter to go through the house with you. Your house is the biggest purchase you'll probably make in your life, make the extra appointment and see it again before you make your final decision.”

Geoff says it's important if you need to get a home inspection, to find an inspector that has a lot of experience in the construction industry, so you get an accurate assessment. He also recommends you request to receive a copy of the home inspection if one is done on the home you are selling.

Buying a fixer upper can sometimes be challenging, but with proper planning and qualified professionals, the results can turn a house into a beautiful home.



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