

Installing the perfect home theatre will make even reruns seem picture perfect, **M2**



RESTYLE

YOUR HOME

BEFORE



AFTER



NICK KOZAK FOR THE TORONTO STAR

Rating the Reno

Ryerson prof uses Riverdale house to test standards of sustainability

RYAN STARR
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Russell Richman's house is an ongoing experiment. The three-storey, 2,300-square-foot detached Riverdale home, which the Ryerson University building science professor bought, gutted and renovated from top to bottom, is the focus of a potentially decade-long research project that will examine the sustainability of renovations to older homes in urban centres.

"The idea is to document the renovation and use it as a vehicle to talk about the practical side of building science — the home's mechanical systems, the

building envelope and the integration of the two," explains Richman, who holds a PhD in civil engineering and is in his fifth year of teaching at Ryerson.

The goal of the project is to develop a more precise definition of sustainability as it applies to the renovation of existing homes.

Ultimately Richman hopes to use the data he gathers from his home study to create a sustainable renovation rating index that can help to evaluate a project's green performance.

SUSTAINABLE continued on M4



NICK KOZAK FOR THE TORONTO STAR

Russell Richman, left, bought an uninhabitable house in Riverdale and then did a \$310,000 renovation. The house is now the focus of a multi-year research project by the Ryerson University professor examining sustainable renovations of older homes in urban areas.

DO-IT-YOURSELF

A split-rail fence presents few hurdles to the handyman

No experience or skill needed to make a fence look charmingly rustic

JENIS GRIGNON
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

It's the perfect handyman project for the man or woman who's not that, well, all that handy.

Building a cedar split-rail fence, I discovered, is pretty forgiving and you certainly don't need the skills of a Bryan Auger to install one.

That post went in a bit crooked? Just adds to its rustic pioneer-like appeal.

The top rail is way thicker than the two it is resting on?

Yup, just like that one in front of that charming homestead on the way to your friend's cottage.

Yes, symmetry for this kind of project isn't only discouraged; it's anathema.

Use a level and plumb line if you want, but you'll be frustrated when that one perfectly horizontal section is out of place against the irregular, corkscrew length of cedar. You don't want this type of fence to look too pretty. That's the point. It's supposed to look cobbled together.

Still, building a split-rail fence isn't entirely haphazard and improvised. There are guidelines — calling them rules

might be a bit of a stretch — that'll make the whole project go a lot smoother and save you some frustration.

Finding rails isn't actually as difficult as you might assume. I found mine in the classified section of a small-town weekly newspaper.

Most weekend rural livestock auctions cum outdoor flea markets, such as the one in Woodville, about 45 minutes north of Oshawa, typically include someone selling out of the back of a pickup. I've knocked on farmhouse doors, which netted positive results, if not from the homeowners then from someone they knew.

FENCE continued on M4



A cedar split-rail fence is virtually foolproof to construct.