

Magna Dental: From Bank to Dental Office

If a patient ever asks Dr. Keith Cummins to extract a gold tooth, the Springfield dentist has the perfect place to store it for safe keeping. In the basement of his office is a 15' x 20', heavily-fortified vault with a stainless steel door featuring a two-day lockout for anyone unfortunate enough to get stuck inside.

But what's really interesting about Cummins' new office in a former bank, is the vault isn't even the most interesting thing about it.

When patients arrive for a checkup, they are instantly transported to a hunting lodge located in some beautiful and remote spot in the country. A large stone fireplace rises over the waiting area that on sunny days is bathed in natural light. A large buffalo head keeps a watchful eye on patients, while a fully intact, hand-made canoe hangs pristinely over the receptionist desk.

"We didn't want to put a bunch of holes in it because It's going with me when I retire," he said of the canoe.

Dr. Cummins is an avid outdoorsman, and his office is a testament to his passions outside of dentistry. The office is filled with trophies from his hunts, including a taxidermied bear that is quite popular with his younger patients.

"I was afraid it might scare people or maybe it would offend someone, but that's who I am. Everyone knows that I hunt and fish," he said.

His wife Candace Cummins, who handles marketing and public relations for the practice, took on the role of chief interior designer for the project. The complete makeover of the space was complicated not only by the fact that floors and furniture had to be washable; the walls, ceiling and floors of the former bank are all made of concrete, making the simple act of hanging a picture a challenge. Yet the Cummins's were able to get the look that they desired.

"We mixed a lot of antiques with newer stuff. And we went with a Texas-meets-Alaska look, because that reflects both of our personalities," she said.

It isn't all aesthetics; the staff and patients at Magna Dental enjoy amenities not commonly found in a dentist office.

The Cummins hired Henry Schein Dental to design the floor plan, which includes 11 operatories, six more than he had at his former office. The layout affords patients more privacy, while still maintaining an open feel. The basement features a laundry room, changing areas, private bathrooms, a conference room, a full kitchen and lounge, space to host CE classes, Candace's office, and, of course, the vault.

"And the vault is here to stay, because there's no getting it out of there," Dr. Cummins said.



The couple used the relocation as an opportunity to rebrand the practice, adopting the name Magna Dental from the Magna Bank branch that formerly resided there. Although some existing patients initially thought Cummins had sold out to a corporate operation, their fears were easily allayed and the practice is now better positioned for growth.

"The name will make it easier when we're bringing new dentists in so we don't have to keep adding new names to the practice," Dr. Cummins.

When they realized that they had outgrown their previous office, the couple was committed to finding an existing building. After finding the vacant bank located on a major thoroughfare into Springfield's downtown area, it took them two years to get it ready, but the time and effort has paid off. They would encourage other dentists to take this same approach when it's time to upgrade or to find a new location.

"There are so many available buildings out there that have character, and you can add your personal touch to it. If you do your homework, you can get a great deal," Candace Cummins said.