

TRADITIONAL HOME

September 2008

BEFORE & AFTER

You won't believe how these homes changed!

62 RENOVATED ROOMS
Surprising solutions to redo your home, inside and out

55 NEW CLASSICS, p. 30
Create instant character

***REVAMP A KITCHEN, p. 84**
Without breaking the bank

BY AMY ELBERT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GORDON BEALL
PRODUCED BY ESTELLE BOND GURALNICK



RENOVATION MAGIC

visions of



REVIVES A BOSTON ARCHITECTURAL JEWEL

grandeur

Formerly grand homes in Boston's South End were routinely robbed of carved fireplace mantels and other architectural embellishments when converted into apartments some 30 years ago. Happily for interior designer Gerald Pomeroy, one Victorian brownstone was overlooked—neglect was its best friend.

Though the interior's ornate plasterwork had been painted a blinding hospital white, it was undamaged. No one bothered to clean or refinish the French walnut parquet floors, but they were left in place. And perhaps most amazing, three mid-1800s Carrara marble fireplace surrounds and mantels remained intact, albeit spray-painted black.

After rehabbing three other Boston properties—two in Beacon Hill and one in Back Bay—Gerald wasn't intimidated by the rundown condition or the unfortunate color choices of previous tenants. He could visualize the grandeur that lay beneath the dirty surface of the four-level home, divided into three separate residences. "I tend to buy places and do them over—places in dire repair that have good bones," Gerald says. "There were 14-foot-high ceilings, huge windows, three working fireplaces, a terrace off the living room, and details like moldings, medallions, and picture railings, all in remarkably good condition."

Gerald bought the first and second floors, united by a stairway when the house was converted to apartments in the 1980s. "My first level is the original parlor, so that's why the moldings are so ornate," he explains. High ceilings and 6-foot-tall windows add to the sense of elegance. "It's spectacular to have that kind of height and abundance of natural light," he says.

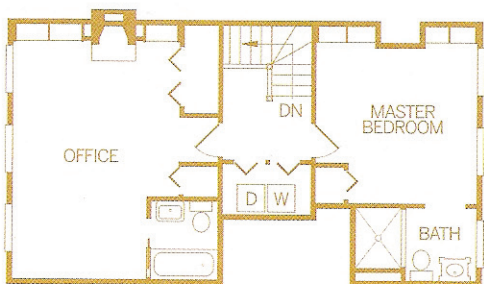
Gerald lived in his Beacon Hill home while renovating the newly acquired brownstone. "I have a wonderful contractor, and



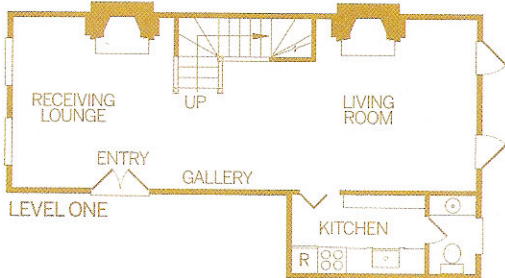


Above and right: Original plasterwork and fireplaces convinced Gerald Pomeroy to buy this Boston brownstone. The entrance to the residence is through mahogany doors in the receiving lounge. **Far left:** A refectory table along the gallery wall folds out to seat eight for dining. **Left:** Mahogany front doors with privacy glass are original. **Preceding pages:** Gerald spends much of his time in the living room, which opens to a terrace. He designed mirror-front cabinets for each end of the first level.





LEVEL TWO



LEVEL ONE

Gerald Pomeroy (above left) painted the walls of his office a deep blue-gray for a dramatic work setting. New crown moldings and window trims are painted white. The house lacked storage, so shelves were built on either side of the fireplace. An evocative painting by Brad Durham hangs above the mantel.





Right: Shelves were added to the master bedroom. Gerald shelves the books spine-in after he reads them. "It's an old Celtic custom I got from my mother," he explains. **Left:** Black-and-white toile wall covering sets the cozy tone of the master bedroom. "I love the way it wraps the space. It's a timeless feel," Gerald says. Plantation shutters on the windows "keep the look clean and architectural," he adds. **Above:** An antique English mirror and French sconces are mounted on the master bathroom's mirrored wall. A marble tile floor and marble vanity top blend with the colors in the bedroom. **Below:** Antique Regency chairs covered with a modern leopard-patterned fabric on the seats flank an antique campaign chest.

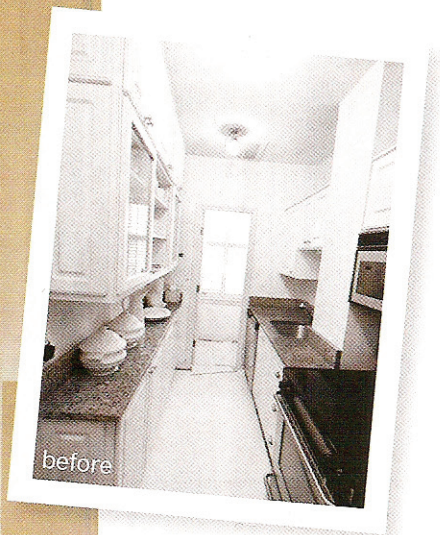
with the right artisans, magic happens." Black paint was stripped from the fireplaces, and the walnut floors were refinished. Staying within the original casements, two windows in the living room were replaced with glass doors that open to the terrace.

Storage was limited, so Gerald designed 10-foot-tall diretoire-style cabinets—one in the receiving lounge for tableware and a second in the living room for electronics. Antiqued mirrored doors and a glazed wood finish "give a little luster," Gerald says. The room's walls are painted a calming apricot-beige and lightly textured with a cheesecloth-applied glaze. "It reads warm and neutral and gives texture and tone."

Upstairs rooms were a bigger challenge, with 8-foot-high ceilings, no trimwork, and zero storage. Gerald added crown moldings, beefed up the window trim, and had shelves built in the master bedroom and office. Because the floors were not original, wool sisal-style wall-to-wall carpeting was installed.







The galley kitchen was updated with new floor-to-ceiling cabinets and Calcutta marble countertops that were designed to complement the elegant millwork in the main living area. The cabinets are glazed with a subtle honey-toned stripe, and the ceiling is painted a deep taupe to highlight the elaborate new crown molding. Floor tiles laid on the diagonal “blow out the space and make it seem larger,” Gerald says. To build on that illusion, floor tiles and the striped wall covering are carried into the adjoining powder room.

Below: A marble farmhouse-style sink and subway tiles with beveled edges give the small kitchen its wow factor. Cabinet hinges, door pulls, and the metal trim on the ceiling light fixture were sandblasted for added depth.



This year, Gerald rehabbed the kitchen, powder room, and master bath. “The driving force was a kitchen that was classic, timeless, and practical,” he explains. Cabinets run to the ceiling for maximum storage. Elegant crown moldings stand out against a taupe-toned ceiling. “When you go dark on the ceiling, the moldings pop,” he says. In the master bath, a French walnut vanity is topped with marble against a mirrored wall. “Mirrors erase dimensions, so a modest room becomes more,” he adds.

While his residence totals an unpretentious 1,500 square feet, the size suits Gerald’s single lifestyle. “I like the traditional footprint with a bedroom upstairs and living space down,” he says. Best of all, he likes being part of a South End renaissance. “The transformation has been astounding. Properties are back to their original grandeur, and there’s a mix of superb restaurants, shops, and theater,” Gerald says. “It’s an exciting place to live.”

For more information, see sources on page 170