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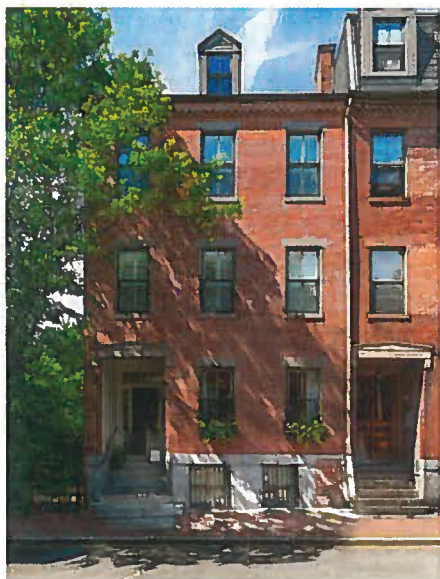
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trending **ARCHITECTURE**

WESTERN RANCH, MOORISH VILLA, SHINGLE STYLE



Lively decorating updates a 19th-century brick rowhouse returned to its historic roots.

BOSTON's Greek Revival brownstones were born in a whirling dervish of rebellion. After the War of 1812, Americans didn't particularly want to see more English influence than they already had, and by the 1840s, Greek Revival style was flourishing.

The classicists of that long-ago era found a purity of style and scale in Greek Revival, just as they do today. One Boston rowhouse, in the South End's 8 Streets Neighborhood, underwent a transformation led by a team of professionals who reimagined the old house in minute detail. The five-story house at the end of the row is back to its original glory.

One factor was historic identity, but there was another side to the equation: the obvious requirement that the house be livable in the 21st century. The homeowners, a young couple with two children, had been residing on the bottom three floors when the house served as a duplex. When the top, two-floor duplex

contemporary Greek Revival

By Mary Grauerholz





Left Deep windows create a glow in the front sitting room, whose centerpiece is a custom table designed by Gerald Pomeroy, a Bulfinch Award recipient. **Below** The marble surround anchors the sitting room in natural, elegant style. **Right** Architect Ruth Bennett replaced the front entry with one that has appropriate Greek Revival sidelights and a transom. **Opposite** The rowhouse is in the revived 8 Streets Neighborhood in Boston's South End.





Above No one would guess that the kitchen's bright and cheery eating area previously was a subterranean space.

Below With grasscloth walls, the master bedroom suite is enveloped in neutral colors.



became available, they snapped it up.

By the time the reconstruction team arrived—Ruth Bennett AIA, principal of RBA Architecture in Belmont; Gerald Pomeroy of Gerald Pomeroy Interiors in Boston; and general contractor Preston Lemanski of Lemanski Construction in Marblehead—they observed the powerful silhouette of an

Below The team agreed that the millwork should shine, and it does in the custom cerulean-blue cabinetry in the kitchen. **Right** All the furniture in the home, including in the upstairs bedrooms, was either refurbished or custom built.



1860 Greek Revival house that had aged badly. And it had undergone remodeling out of step with its historic nature, including a conversion to a triplex and then a duplex. The only choice was to strip it to the studs.

"When we started the journey, it became clear early on that structurally it wasn't sound," Pomeroy recalls. Today the rowhouse is a breathtaking replica of the original, with every architectural piece designed in precise Greek Revival style and refined, stylish décor that nods to history but makes appropriate updates for a modern family's lifestyle and aesthetics. Architect Bennett developed

a plan that distinguishes each floor as parallel spaces, with a stair hall consuming about a third of the space, and on each side, open space that subtly segues into different living areas.

On a bright fall day, sunshine washes over almost every room, thanks largely to the incorporation of deep, original-style windows. Even the lowest floor, formerly a subterranean space, is as bright and beautiful as any other part of the house, thanks to a major excavation in back overseen by Bennett and the incorporation of French doors and floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking a lovely courtyard. As in the 1800s, this floor



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In one of the children's bedrooms, rich colors enliven some classics.

Its historic identity was important, but also the house had to be livable to meet modern expectations. Bennett's space planning and Pomeroy's interiors come together in a contemporary home with classical scale.

houses the kitchen and a dining area. There is also a sitting area—replete with an original fireplace and an alcove for a home office—and a powder room.

The space has a comfortable open flow, which Pomeroy, a Bulfinch Award recipient, knitted together with deep cerulean-blue kitchen cabinetry, upholstery, and accents against the neutral background.

In the original house, the parlor-level floor opened off the foyer to an ornately detailed receiving room, with a double parlor to the foyer's right. Pomeroy and Bennett, working in close collaboration, arranged it in two separate spaces: one a combination receiving room and dining area; and, on the other side, a sitting area around a fireplace with a marble surround. Pomeroy tamped down any elaborate adornment in favor of a neutral palette with "hits" of color, such as the room's pale-coral lacquered ceiling and decorative accents

in vermillion, azure, and other bright or saturated shades.

Pomeroy's keen judgment allows this floor's very special pieces to shine, including a round mahogany Empire-style table with gilded detailing (which Pomeroy designed) and an abstract painting juxtaposed with the classical architecture.

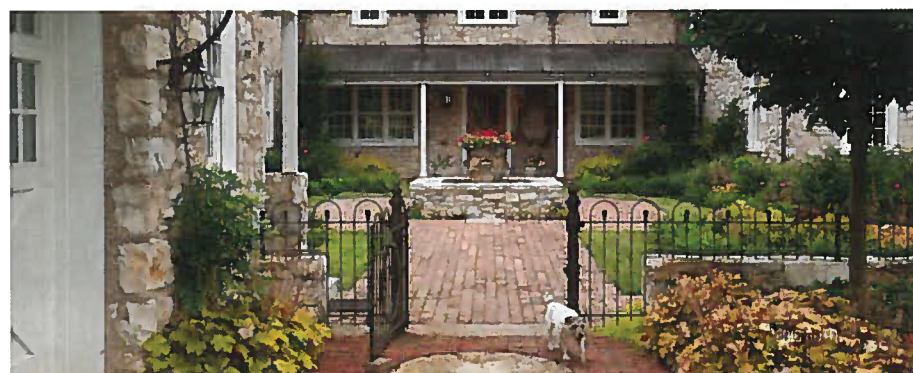
In the master suite, on the floor above, Pomeroy lined the walls with soothing grasscloth. The children's rooms, with a Jack-and-Jill bath, follow on the next floor, and the top floor is devoted to a guest suite and playroom.

Pomeroy custom-designed all the new furniture and had remaining furniture reupholstered in the 3,000-square-foot home. That was important, he says, to fit the team's philosophy of letting the architectural details take center stage. Everyone agreed that the millwork, carefully mirroring the original style and designed by Bennett, should be celebrated.

Bennett dug into *Architectural Mouldings* by Carl F. Schmidt and other references, researching accurate historic style. She found much amiss in the rowhouse. "A Greek Revival entry would have had sidelights and a transom over it and a four-panel entry door," Bennett says. "When we found the house, it was almost a French door with an arch pattern. We replaced it." Squat, undistinguished windows were replaced with two-over-two sashes. The team plowed onward, recrafting all the elements that did not fit the historic character. "We went before the historical commission three times to change the outside," Bennett says. "All profiles and panes are accurate."

The homeowners couldn't be happier. Both thrive in history-minded Boston and now their revitalized South End home gives them the character and the space they needed. "They very much like having the urban experience, the parks, like other young families," Pomeroy says. "It's a renaissance for the city." •

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 110.



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