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# True to Form

An historic home is revitalized with modern attributes while retaining its authentic character.





The perimeter counters are made of impervious soapstone and a ladder slides the length of one wall to access the upper cabinets. "It's a decorative element that provides utility," says Larson. Opposite page: Installing a pizza oven was at the top of the family's wish list.

In the late 1800s, much of Boston's elite hired the esteemed architectural firm of Chapman & Frazer to design their homes in Back Bay, Brookline, and Newton. Among the firm's commissions was this stately Federal Revival. Appreciative of the pedigree of the 1898 residence, the new homeowners wanted to maintain its period detailing, which includes paneled and arched openings between rooms, fluted columns, and decorative leaded glass.

Some interior modifications had to be made, though, to make the house suited to an active family of five, which included a two-story addition at the back of the house that accommodates a new kitchen and a second story office and recreation room.

The project's biggest undertaking was to relocate the gambrel-roofed barn from the back of the property to connect with the residence. "It took us a solid year to get the move approved by the historic preservation commission," recalls the architect on the project, Kent Duckham. When the approval came through, the barn





The walnut used in the butler's pantry is stained darker than it is in the kitchen. "The darker finish has a richer feel and is period specific to what would have been used in a butler's pantry around when the home was built," says Larson. Brass hardware and the glass front upper cabinets that showcase barware and serving dishes, also ties into the era.



was moved to the side of the property while a new foundation was created next to the house for it. Then, it was moved again and put on the foundation and restored; an enclosed breezeway connects the converted barn, now a garage, to the house.

Inside, the detailed trim and paneling that was authentic to the house was preserved and elements in the home's new areas were recreated that emulate the home's late 19<sup>th</sup>-century spirit. "We worked carefully to bring spaces up to 21<sup>st</sup> century style without losing the original character of the home," says Brett Larson, of Fallon Custom Homes and Renovations, the firm that built out the renovation, designed the kitchen, and fabricated the custom millwork.

The expansive new kitchen is anchored by a white quartz-topped island that takes the form of an old farmer's trestle table. "It has a stained walnut trestle frame inset with natural oak boards that mimic the tongue and groove boards that we installed on the ceiling to give warmth to the space," says Larson.

The kitchen has an integrated dining area which has a built-in upholstered bench flanked by floor-to-ceiling bookcases and doors that lead to the yard. A black and white color scheme both ties the room together and differentiates the two spaces: in the dining area black accents contrast with white painted trim, while the utilitarian part of the room features a predominately white scheme with black painted trim.

The kitchen flooring is laid in a herringbone pattern, which is in keeping with the aesthetic in the older part of the home. Made of rift and quartered white oak, the floors throughout the home were stained with a custom color that took about 12 different iterations to perfect, says Jay Bourgeois, owner of JJ Hardwood Flooring, the team that installed all of the floors in the house. "We did what's called a 'water pop' to the floors to achieve this color," says Bourgeois. "Water is applied to the floor and when it hits the wood, it opens the grain and allows it take more color from the stain."



Southern yellow pine was used for the breezeway's vaulted ceiling while the walls are clad with board and batten paneling.



The floors on the upper-level addition are wide plank custom walnut, which has a slightly more modern feel. Fallon's carpentry team used post and timber construction in the new portion to create open space and architectural details that felt original to the house.

On the exterior, the home's existing dormers had to be matched and the new paneling, columns and surrounds were inspired by the existing architecture. "We also had to restore all of the home's windows—the historic

commission wouldn't let us replace them. So, we sent them all out to a company to be fixed," says Duckham. It was a lengthy process, but one that he and the entire design team respected.

"The home being in a historic district created challenges with materials we could use and the details that had to be preserved," says Duckham, "but everyone involved was really committed to doing things the right way."

Architect: Duckham Architecture  
Builder and Kitchen Designer: Fallon Custom Homes and Renovations  
Flooring: JJ Hardwood Floors  
Photography: Warren Patterson