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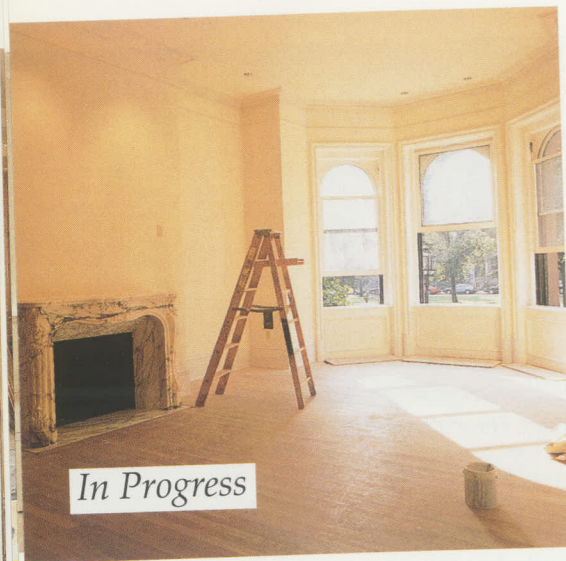
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Before

"They wanted their residence to feel as it did when it was built in 1876," says William Hodgins of a couple's Boston town house. ABOVE: The living room bay is original.



In Progress

ABOVE: Hodgins, who collaborated on the project with architect Lindsay Boutros-Ghali, enlarged the original wood moldings and added a Louis XV-style marble mantel.

The streets of Boston illustrate the city's growth, in scale and prosperity, from the Colonial settlement huddled around its port, through Federal-era Beacon Hill, with its rounded brick bays and cobbled lanes, to the broad avenues and imposing houses of Back Bay, created on landfill and inspired by Haussmann's Paris. Most of these spacious residences have now been divided up, and that is how a professional couple found their five-story town house: gutted and stripped

After

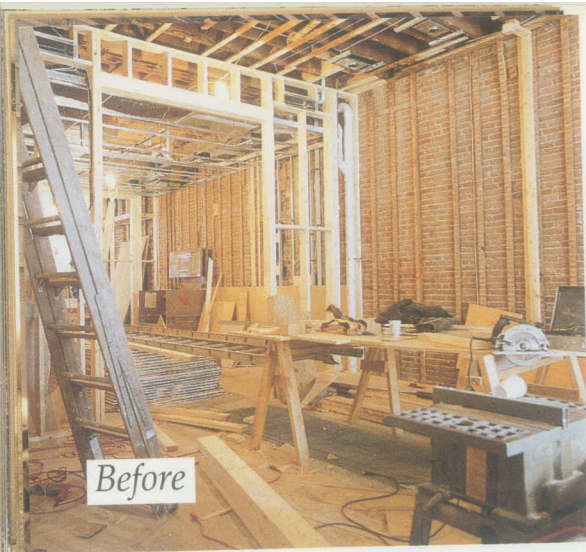
BOSTON REVIVAL

INFUSING A VENERABLE TOWN HOUSE WITH LIGHT AND SYMMETRY

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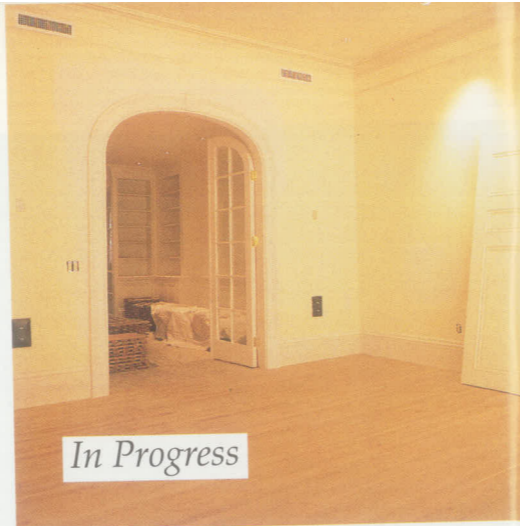
"The living room was part of the plan to organize the main floor so that it can be opened up from front bay to rear windows—for entertaining and to draw sunlight in," says Hodgins. A Tang horse and figurines rest on the mantel, which, along with the Louis XV wall lights, is from Marvin Alexander. A Tiffany's wine cooler holds roses. Brunschwig & Fils drapery silk, rose pillow fabric and ottoman upholstery fabric and fringe. Sofa fabric from Manuel Canovas. Trevor Potts mahogany-and-marble low table. Stark carpet.



Before

"We asked that our house have serenity and a calm palette," says the wife. LEFT: Workmen stripped the walls down. Framing indicates the defining arched wall that now separates the living and dining rooms.

RIGHT: The completed arch shows the continuous flow of space provided by the glazed doors, which can be closed to give more privacy without compromising the open atmosphere. The floors are bleached oak.



In Progress

"Everything about the house, except for the original exterior walls, has been rethought and redesigned," says Boutros-Ghali.



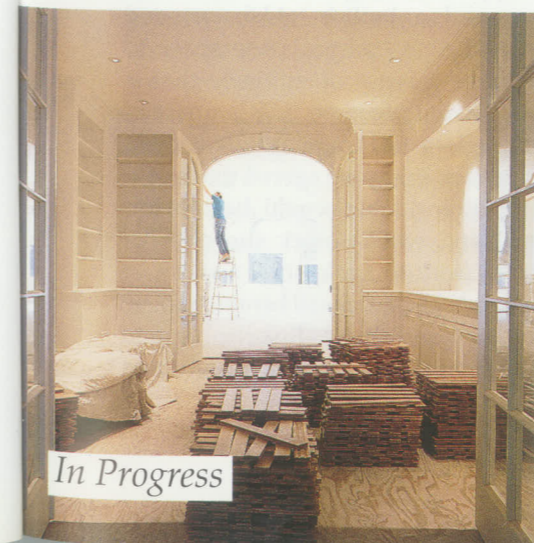
After

ABOVE: The intimacy of the dining room's banquette area is underscored by Georgian-style armchairs and a leather wing chair placed at the double-pedestal table. "I like to put bookcases in dining rooms," says the designer. "It encourages people to talk and creates a pleasing informality." Ancient pottery is arrayed on the shelves. Bergamo fabric on tufted armchair.



Before

"We had to harmonize all five floors in the house," says Boutros-Ghali. ABOVE: A dropped ceiling allows for more inventive lighting in the dining room. BELOW: A built-in sideboard, right, was installed.



In Progress



After

ABOVE: The banquette, which was fixed against the wall, permitted the dining table to be set to one side, enabling easy passage through the room. The pair of bouillotte single-light lamps on shelves are from Marvin Alexander. Clarence House velvet on George II bench in the living room beyond. Baccarat crystal. The armchairs are covered in Brunswig & Fils velvet.

of ornament in preparation for its conversion to condominiums. They had outgrown a duplex and decided to buy the entire house, commissioning architect Lindsay Boutros-Ghali and, a little later, designer William Hodgins, to knit it back together.

"Everything about the house, except for the original exterior walls, has been rethought and redesigned," says Boutros-Ghali. "I had been restoring older houses on Beacon Hill, so this residence was a fresh challenge. The transformation was a collaborative process, involving a variety of talented people and extending over many months. It combined traditional craftsmanship with a sense of what

was needed for living in the 1990s."

For Hodgins it was familiar territory: He lives in a smaller contemporary of the house, just a block away (see *Architectural Digest*, September 1987), and he has worked in Boston for twenty-five years. "The handsome proportions, fourteen-foot-high ceilings and expansive windows appealed as strongly to the clients as they did to me," he says, "and none of them had to be changed. I wanted to bring out the innate character of the house and its setting while responding to the tastes of the new owners. But you have to make changes in a place that was built a hundred and twenty years ago."

The residents proposed that the entire first floor to the right of the entrance hall be left unpartitioned, from the front bay to the rear windows. Boutros-Ghali proposed a compromise: round-headed arches and internal glazed doors that would define living, dining and kitchen/family rooms but could be opened up for entertaining. The architect and clients debated where these divisions should be placed, and the contractor built a dummy wall that could be moved back and forth until everyone was happy with the proportions of the living room. Walls were painted white throughout, and floors were resurfaced in bleached oak boards, laid ei-



Before

"The kitchen is tucked behind the stairs," says Boutros-Ghali. ABOVE: To create a family room, a wall that isolated the former kitchen from its formal dining room was removed.



In Progress

ABOVE: The kitchen flows into the adjacent family room, where built-in shelves and cabinetry establish visual continuity. At right is a Louis XVI-style *faux-marbre* mantel.

ther straight or in a herringbone pattern from one room to the next. Each of the three first-floor rooms has a distinct character that complements the others. "We enlarged the existing wood molding to give scale to the walls," says Hodgins. "I persuaded the clients to remove the mantels that had been put in for the condos, and we installed a graceful black-veined marble surround, a little older than the house, to give focus to the living room. Much of the furni-

Walls were painted white throughout, and



After

ABOVE: "The kitchen/family room's floor plan makes it possible to cook, eat, read and watch television in a relaxing yet quietly elegant setting," says Hodgins. Wall lights from Price Glover. Clarence House patterned drapery, sofa, solid tufted armchair and pillow fabrics. Rosecore jute binding around the Stark carpet.

ture comes from their former apartment, but I kept it well spaced, to throw each object into relief." The owners are well-traveled collectors, and contemporary canvases share the room with a Ming Dynasty painting on silk of six beauties, and a spirited terra-cotta horse and figurines from the Tang Dynasty. Swags of watery blue-green silk give the bay the air of a proscenium arch. Blinds pull up from the sills to allow privacy but admit a flood of south light.

In the dining room, a dropped ceiling and a built-in sideboard and bookshelves compress the space to achieve a sense of intimacy that is subtly reinforced by tiny lamps, Roman glass and fragments of ancient ceramics. Everyone agreed that a central dining table would be too formal and would block the passage from front to back, so it was set to one side against a wall banquette. The cabinets and shelves link the room to the family area beyond, which is as

floors were resurfaced in bleached oak boards.



After

ABOVE: "The study was designed for a man who works out of his home and sometimes has meetings there," explains Hodgins. "It's comfortable and clublike." A Cycladic figure stands on a carved giltwood table next to the mantel from Danny Alessandro. Hermès leather on Regency chair. Rosecore carpet.

spacious as the living room but appropriately relaxed. Seating is grouped around a fireplace with a *faux*-stone wood mantel. The greatest challenge for the architect was to make the five floors, separated during the conversion, feel once again like parts of a single-family house. The original stair, which had been chopped up, had provided access, but the clients wanted something that was lighter and more elegant. Boutros-Ghali was inspired by

the stairs she had seen on Beacon Hill and commissioned a shipbuilder to work with her on the technical complexities. "We had to design a stair that was comfortable to use for its entire length," she says, "and to ensure that the bottom eight treads would sit well in the entrance hall. "I was also concerned about the monotony of the long straight corridor that led from the entrance hall to the kitchen," continues Boutros-Ghali. She made a transition from



Before

ABOVE: The husband's study was fashioned from a space that also had a bay. Though the basic architectural configuration was kept, extensive rewiring was necessary.



In Progress

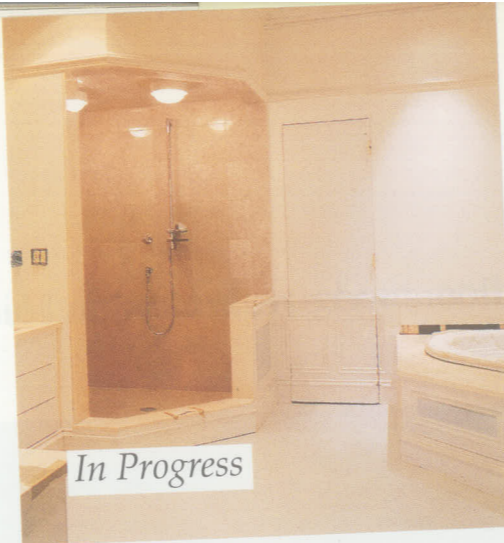
ABOVE: The new fireplace was prepared for the Louis XVI-style marble mantel while the bay was ornamented with simple moldings. Heating units were installed.

front to back by using a curving wall. She extended the stairs as well, and fashioned an entrance to the rooftop, which has a beautiful view. The second-floor master bedroom is properly Bostonian in its understated sense of period. A highlight is the stripped-pine mantel with its delicately modeled gesso thistles suggesting a Scottish origin. The residents like working at home, and their third-floor offices reflect their different personalities. The husband asked for a



"When the house was divided into condominiums, almost all the decorative detailing was taken out," says the wife. "It was a blessing in disguise—it left us a clean slate to work with." LEFT: The shell of the new master bath.

RIGHT: Hodgins lined the corner shower and the steam unit with pale marble to echo the treatments given the tub surround and vanities. The door's panel is detailed to minimize the disruption of the solid wall.



LEFT: The reframing of a structural wall in the master bedroom, right, made the room wide enough so that a bed could fit in the room without jutting into the fireplace. The floor was smoothed out.

"My husband and I put in the things we wanted to, which caught the spirit of the way the house used to be," says the wife. RIGHT: A sun-catching bay with triple windows defines the master bedroom's sitting area.



ABOVE: "I planned the master bath as a clean-lined, luxurious room," says Hodgins, who glazed the walls and added recessed lighting. Moldings and detailing provide formality and link the space to the rest of the house's interiors.

The master bedroom is properly Bostonian in its understated sense of period.



study that was big, dark and spare, containing objects from Europe and the Orient that have become old friends. "I spend a lot of time alone, telephoning around the world," he explains, "so I've filled the room with scenes of travel and hurly-burly." Hodgins created an interior that is as welcoming and sober as a traditional club yet light and modern in feeling.

In contrast, the wife needed a room that would not only serve as a serene retreat but be equally suitable as a place to write and conduct interviews and seminars. Hodgins gave her a sitting room with a partners' desk and soft chairs that is businesslike and relaxing. Linking the two spaces is a library with wraparound shelves backed with marbled paper.

The clients' highest priority was to feel comfortable in every room, and to enjoy spaces compatible with their varied needs and interests. The house works as well for a business dinner as it did for their two-year-old's birthday party. Lindsay Boutros-Ghali, who guided the transformation from front stoop to roof, describes the collaboration with William Hodgins and the residents as addictive and exhilarating. "A project like this," she says, "takes on a life of its own." □

LEFT: "I designed the master bedroom to suit and reflect the residence's origins," explains Hodgins. A shirred drapery backdrop softens the bed alcove. The ornate 18th-century mantel is stripped pine and compe. Manuel Canovas fabric on the chaise.