

MODERN LUXURY

BOSTON COMMON

THE GIVING ISSUE

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+

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PERIPHERAL VISION

CHLOË GRACE MORETZ'S SECOND SIGHT

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BEAUTY IN THE PATINA

One New England townhouse received a much-needed face-lift, upgraded with clean lines of contemporary design and historic details.

BY MADISON DUDDY // PHOTOGRAPHED BY NAT REA





From left: Once a colossal eyesore, the kitchen's brick centerpiece adds a touch of historic character; natural light pours through the additional windows, brightening the once-dark room even more.



Tight, historical houses are no small feat to transform. Luckily for one family, they just happen to be the specialty of Catherine Truman of Catherine Truman Architects (truman-architects.com). “This is a perfect example of the kind of projects I love to do,” she says about the 19th century townhouse. “It’s all a lot of fun to figure out how to take a Rubik’s Cube of a problem and move all the pieces around to make it work.” The four-level, 3,202-square-foot home, situated in Charlestown’s gaslight neighborhood, went from housing three beds and 2 ½ baths to four beds and 3 ½ baths—and Truman only



From left: Beyond the entrance awaits a stunning foyer with painted floors, which are characteristic of older homes; past a built-in bookcase is the living room with soft hues and tall windows.

utilized the existing space. “You can’t suddenly say, ‘Oh, we need another four inches, we’ll just grow the house.’ We have to figure out how to make it work with what we’ve got,” she explains. After two years of renovations, the historic home was complete, featuring custom details that seamlessly mingled within the existing bones. Upon entering, an artistic foyer meets the eyes, adorned with black, white and gray-painted wood floors in a diamond design that complement the curved staircase’s navy runner. While the owners and design team looked at a variety of ideas for the floor, the diamond shape was surely meant to be. She adds, “After we had

already decided that this pattern was where we wanted to go, we found a Costa concrete tile in the back mudroom that had an almost identical pattern.” Past the foyer, a white and airy kitchen received the most significant transformation. The previously dark and cramped room now houses white, custom-built cabinets, four broad windows and bar seating for four around a butcher block oak peninsula. Plus, the team freshened up a few historic elements. The dark, beamed ceiling offers a stark juxtaposition from the bright ambiance below, while an expansive brick fireplace went from bleak to chic. “Sometimes you want to take out the ugly, hulking, massive brick in the middle of the house because it’s in the way, but in this



Finalizing the foyer's floor design required Catherine Truman and her team to draw up a variety of scales until finding the perfect fit.

“WE WORKED WITH THE CHARACTER THAT THE HOME ALREADY HAD, NOT TRYING TO IMITATE IT BUT JUST TRYING TO COMPLEMENT IT.”

—CATHERINE TRUMAN

case, it's like, 'Wow, this could be an asset.' With a fresh coat of white paint, the eyesore became a creative centerpiece. Upstairs, the second floor houses a formal living room, study and more. With space to spare after removing the home's back staircase, Truman converted a large bathroom into a bedroom. The design team also built an additional bathroom where the back staircase was, and brightened it with Scalamandré (scalamandre.com) wallpaper in *Chinoise Exotique*. Completing the home, a third floor features three bedrooms, including a primary with an en suite. A wood-burning fireplace adds a cozy element to the suite, but nothing compares to the bathroom's amenities: Think a rainhead shower with white tile from Tile Showcase (tileshowcase.com) and traditional Japanese soaking tub from Zen Bathworks (zenbathworks.com). And somehow, the modern, sumptuous amenities became one with the century-old elements. “We worked with the character that the home already had, not trying to imitate it but just trying to complement it,” Truman notes. ◦

