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In this issue you will find 16 Buying Guides on our issue theme: The New Period Home. The Guides contain information on suppliers, manufacturers, custom fabricators, artists and artisans, as well as many photographs of their work. You will also find our annual sustainable section: Green Building Products & Services.

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As a designer, educator and author, Christine Franck is one of Classicism’s most compelling proponents. By Nancy A. Ruhling

"Classical architecture is not a style," says Christine G. H. Franck. "Rather, it is a tradition of thought, a tradition of place-making."

That the award-winning New York City designer makes this statement in the present tense is no accident. "Classicism views the past as useful to the present," she says. "In this view, the best knowledge of how to do things is conserved and transmitted from the past to the present, rather than creating new things for the sake of the new."

To emphasize her position, Franck points to her own past. Growing up in Williamsburg, VA, in a simple Colonial-style house designed by her parents, she acquired an early appreciation of Classical architecture. "Williamsburg’s architecture and urbanism are so rich with beauty and meaning that you can’t help but learn and be interested," she says.

As a child, she designed her first house on a piece of graph paper her father gave her. Later, thanks to her junior high school’s gifted and talented program, she enrolled first in a self-directed architectural mentorship at the College of William and Mary and then in an internship with local architect Robert Magoon. "I was very lucky, because my teachers, mentors and parents guided, supported and encouraged my interests," she says.

Trained as an architect — she holds a bachelor of science in architecture from the University of Virginia and a master of architecture from the University of Notre Dame — she works today as a designer, educator and author.

"In college, we were taught Postmodernism, but it lacked depth and beauty," she says. "The architecture posited by Postmodernism paled in comparison to that of Williamsburg and early American towns. When my parents moved to suburban northern Virginia while I was in college, I was exposed to the dire state of America’s built environment and its threat to our well-being. I felt compelled to change that for the better. The contrast between Williamsburg and suburban northern Virginia showed me how much was lost when Modernism rejected the past. After completing my undergraduate work at Virginia, I was thrilled to find others who thought as I did, such as Thomas Gordon Smith, who had formed a new program..."
in Classical architecture at Notre Dame. There I began my education as a Classicist and started filling in the gaps left by my undergraduate education."

During the two decades of her career, Franck has continued to see a vital, contemporary Classical tradition as the answer to today’s dysfunctional built environment. “My mission is to make certain that this tradition of architecture – both its Classical root and many traditional branches – continues to be available to new generations so we may create places worthy of us,” she says.

Principles at Work
Chadsworth Cottage, the first home Franck designed, is a stunning example of how she has put her principles into practice. The cottage, which won the 2007 Palladio Award for best new residential construction under 5,000 sq.ft., proved that beauty and budget can live happily ever after.

“A common myth is that you can’t afford to build Classical architecture today, and that nobody makes the products you need,” she says. “This project, which relies primarily upon stock items, shows that you can.”

The house, completed in 2005 on Figure Eight Island in North Carolina for Jeffrey L. Davis, the founder of Chadsworth Columns, was to be formal in language yet relaxed enough to function as a primary residence for the owner and a vacation home for his guests. “We drew upon details from North Carolina towns such as Wilmington and New Bern to ground the house in local traditions,” says Franck. “The design is canonically Classical but modified to meet a moderate budget.”

Franck designed the house then sought high-quality products, modifying the design to fit them. “This was a challenge for me because I had begun my career interning with Allan Greenberg and working on custom projects with rather large budgets,” says Franck. “It took research, creativity and a willingness to forgo dimensional perfection to make this work.”

In the 1980s (above), the Byrd residence got a heavy dose of incorrect Classical architecture that was later corrected by Franck. With new Classical ornament, whitewashed brick and green shutters, the renovated façade (left) of the Byrd Residence matches the balanced elegance of the original design. Photos: Hall Homes
She used Classical architecture to her advantage. "An example of the power of the Classical language is that through careful use of scale, you can manipulate perceived size," she says. "Most people think Chadsworth Cottage is far larger than the mere 3,500 sq.ft. that make up the two main living floors of the house. This is because of the use of the giant order, the corner pilasters and the full entablature, all of which set one large scale for the house. This large scale, through moldings and details, is then broken down so that it is approachable. It feels grand and hospitable at once."

The renovation, carried out by Brent Hull of Hull Homes, won the 2010 Historic Fort Worth Residential Award for Excellence in Preservation.

"The house looks much as it did when it was built," says Franck. "The Classical language restored the home to its original balance and grace."

Warm Welcomes
Franck, who lives in an Upper East Side townhouse in Manhattan, is equally comfortable working in public spaces. She has decorated and renovated a number of apartment building lobbies.

"This gives me a wonderful opportunity to work in historic buildings," she says. "The lobby is like the vestibule of a private home; it's the first impression for guests."

On the Upper East Side of Manhattan, for instance, Franck brought new life to the old-fashioned lobby of an apartment building. The pre-war space had been altered over the years to create what Franck calls a "mishmash" style all its own. Partnering with the New York City decorator Eric Cohler, Franck added new lighting, furniture, a rug, artwork and custom-designed decorative millwork for the walls and fireplace surround.

"The overmantel was made with stock pieces, which made it a very inexpensive part of the project," says Franck. "The wall moldings were designed to create a pattern of panels that de-accentuate the horizontal nature of the room while integrating the ventilation grilles into the panel scheme, bringing order to the space."

Spreading the Word
Franck's work extends far beyond the walls of her projects, whether they are public or private. The author of several books, including José M. Alleque: A Builder’s Legacy, Winterthur Style Sourcebook: Traditional American Rooms, co-authored with Brent Hull, and the IC&A’s forthcoming Classical Architecture: A Handbook of the Tradition Today, Franck devotes nearly half of her time to teaching, writing, speaking and advocacy.

"Writing books and essays and teaching forms an essential part of my work as this helps educate students, professionals and the general public alike about good design, architecture and history," she says. "The greatest obligation we have is to teach. I'm so proud of the students I've worked with over the years."

She began her teaching career in 1996, when she helped create a traditional architecture and urbanism program for the Prince of Wales’s Institute of Architecture’s first American Summer School. "These programs acted as catalysts for two American towns to help change their thinking about the built environment. They also changed the lives of the many students who attended them," she says.

Later, as the first executive director of the Institute for the Study of Classical Architecture (today’s IC&A) in New York, she created a series of highly respected programs that vastly increased the influence of the organization and helped bring it international standing. She developed its existing summer program into one that gave students hands-on experience in confronting urban and architectural issues in New York City. Students in this studio program met with local authorities, developed a master plan, created building designs consistent with the plan and presented them to the public.

Franck also revamped the institute’s professional continuing-education courses, adding an international program that includes drawing tours of Rome and Naples, and set up a program for the American Institute of Building Design to educate residential designers and homebuilders.

"When I was working on Chadsworth Cottage, I gained an appreciation of the challenges homeowners face today," she says. "This program, which introduced them to Classical architecture and traditional urbanism, met them where they
were and helped them make better design choices. These residential designers and homebuilders are crucial to significant change in the industry because they are the people designing the vast majority of houses.”

The homebuilders’ program, which included travel, lectures and a residential design project, received the American Institute of Building Design Award of Excellence.

Harkening back to her initial introduction to architecture in Williamsburg, Franck’s teaching includes a residential design studio that she has taught at the Georgia Institute of Technology, where she was the 2007 Harrison Design Scholar, and in several studios at the University of Notre Dame. “Houses are often considered too simple of a project for students, yet to me they offer an excellent arena for the student to develop a methodology of study and design,” she says.

Mapping the Future
Franck’s passionate devotion to better architecture, urbanism and education has led her to play integral roles in the formation and development of the International Network of Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism; the New Urban Guild and the Council for European Urbanism; and, most importantly, the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art. As a long-serving trustee of the institute, she not only led the development of its academic programs but also the initial formation of its chapters, now the vibrant life-blood of the institute.

In 2002, she received the Prince of Wales’ Foundation for the Built Environment’s first Public Service Award for her “outstanding contribution to architectural education and design.”

In the two decades Franck has been in practice, she has seen great changes, but she also sees a long way to go before the built environment is what it should be. Her career came of age when today’s Classical renaissance was in its infancy.

“Thirty years from now, I’d like to see more professionals trained as Classical architects because that’s the best way for them to learn how to think responsibly and rationally about the built environment,” she says. “The breadth and depth of the Classical tradition over time shows us how to best meet the challenges of today so we may leave a better, more just and beautiful world to subsequent generations.”
The award is named in honor of Clem Labine, founder of Traditional Building, Period Homes and Old House Journal magazines. Photo: courtesy of Clem Labine

The book, which contains architectural patterns and techniques rooted in Louisiana traditions, was developed by Pittsburgh-based Urban Design Associates (UDA), led by Raymond L. Gindroz, FAIA. Gindroz has devoted his long career to rebuilding and renewing communities in need and fostering an appreciation for traditional design among laypeople and in the academy. For these and other achievements, Gindroz is the winner of the third annual Clem Labine Award.

Founded in 2009, The Clem Labine Award honors a person who has made a long-term commitment to creating public places that foster community, civility and traditional design. The award is named for longtime publisher, author and traditionalist Clem Labine, who founded this magazine, among others. According to Labine, the winner of the award may be an architect, artist, craftsman, community leader or some other professional, as long as that person is leading "a life..."
with a purpose" and has vocational and avocational lives that are intertwined. The first two recipients were Alvin Holm, AIA, and Steven W. Semes. In naming Gindroz to this illustrious roster, Labine hailed his work as an urban planner, architect and philanthropist.

Gindroz began his architecture career as a student at Carnegie Mellon University, where he earned both a bachelor of architecture degree and a master of architecture in urban design, each with honors. In 1964, while still in graduate school, Gindroz was invited by David Lewis to co-found Urban Design Associates. Lewis, who established the urban design program at Carnegie Mellon, was exiled from South Africa in 1946 for his anti-apartheid activism. In the 47 years since its founding, UDA has received more than 100 awards for its work in building and rebuilding neighborhoods, including national AIA Honor Awards, Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) Charter Awards and Palladio Awards.

According to Gindroz, UDA’s goal is to design not just buildings, but communities, and to empower citizens through pattern books, charrettes and other outreach programs. Gindroz has led urban design projects in many U.S. cities including Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Louisville, Norfolk, Richmond and New Orleans, as well as others in France, Scotland and England. The firm has developed urban design and architectural designs for more than 25 Hope VI projects since 1994. This federal program replaced some of the nation’s most distressed public housing with mixed-income neighborhoods. UDA’s designs in many cities have been built as new neighborhoods, connected to adjacent neighborhoods and assimilated into their communities instead of standing apart.

“Early in our career, after trying to design neighborhoods with some of our Modernist vocabularies,” says Gindroz, “we quickly learned that people in communities that had character were very concerned about keeping that character. We also learned that the design of dwellings and neighborhoods can play a very positive role in the social sustainability of a neighborhood. For example, when the character of a barracks-style public housing project was transformed into a typical neighborhood through the addition of porches and traditional elements, children began doing better in school. According to their teachers, this was because of an improved self-image. They were no longer kids from the project, but rather from a neighborhood.”

Among other achievements, Gindroz has taught at his alma mater, Carnegie Mellon, as well as at Yale’s Graduate School of Architecture, and in a series of short courses at McGill University, Hampton University and the Prince’s Foundation for the Built Environment in London, where he is a senior fellow. He is a past chair of the AIA’s National Committee on Design, the CNU and the Seaside Institute, and serves on the board of several foundations. Gindroz’ drawings and plans have been featured in more than a dozen notable exhibitions and he has written several books, including The Place of Dwelling, published by the Prince’s Foundation. He was the principal author, along with others at UDA, of The Architectural Pattern Book: A Tool for Building Great Neighborhoods and The Urban Design Handbook: Techniques and Working Methods (published by W. W. Norton & Company).

Patterns for Living

Gindroz remembers a time in the mid-1980s when he and a photographer visited a traditional development in Richmond that the firm had designed. As they walked around taking pictures, a resident walked up to them and asked what they were looking for. The resident knew Gindroz’ work and invited him to see their homes and porches. “They had put a roof over them,” Gindroz says. “They had added porches, done all sorts of improvements that had been there for more than 100 years.”

Above left: Pattern books are an essential piece of UDA’s identity. They are “non-confrontational,” says Gindroz, and solution-oriented. The pattern book for downtown Norfolk has been essential to building consensus there, Gindroz says.

Above right: The Louisiana Speaks: Pattern Book, which offers details on how to rebuild the Gulf Coast in traditional, harmonious ways after the devastation of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, flew off the shelves in its first two printings.
doing. When Gindroz explained his role as the architect and talked about the development’s traditional design principles, the resident brought the discussion down to the most fundamental terms. “This is a neighborhood. Can’t you see that?” the man said, with full understanding. “There are families here.”

Gindroz quickly noticed that whenever the firm went out into neighborhoods, talking with the people who actually lived in them, they responded most readily to traditional concepts. One of the firm’s earliest commissions, for example, was to develop historic district guidelines for the city of York, PA, which at that point had the largest historic neighborhood on the National Register of Historic Places. “We carefully analyzed the block of Victorian-era houses,” says Gindroz. “We were astonished at how simple they were from a building standpoint – how correct they were. They were always extremely attractive, whatever the mix of styles and building types. The whole was very harmonious.”

Putting those concepts into architectural pattern books for modern times was a natural progression for the firm and has become an important part of its identity. Pattern books date to ancient Roman times and were in continual use in the U.S. through the postwar period. Yet they had fallen out of favor with the rise of Modernist, isolating buildings and sprawl-inducing development. “We began writing these guidelines and gradually called what we were doing ‘pattern books,’” says Gindroz. “We did more and more research into how they were done in the past and thought about how we could do them in the 21st century. The breakthrough came with Celebration [the New Urbanist development in Florida]. We started out doing design guidelines, but it turned into a full pattern book. Design guidelines are usually a source of warfare between developers and architects. Pattern books are non-confrontational. The more we studied neighborhoods, we realized that by working with the traditional architectural vocabulary you could introduce new things in new ways that were comfortable for people.”

With a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Surdna Foundation and the Fannie Mae Foundation, UDA developed A Pattern Book for Neighborly Houses, a joint project for Habitat for Humanity and the Institute of Classical Architecture & Classical America. Clearly written and beautifully illustrated, the book could be read and understood by building professionals and laypeople alike. After an overview that includes the definition of a so-called “neighborly house” – one that is set back from the street and aligned with other houses, with a front yard or possibly a front porch and well-placed parking – the pattern book offers an instructive look at neighborhood patterns, housing patterns and housing types. The overview of American architectural styles provides dimensions and details, and a guide to sustainable design is perfectly compatible with the traditional concepts illustrated elsewhere in the book.

The Louisiana Speaks: Pattern Book, which was prepared for the foundation-funded Center for Planning Excellence in Baton Rouge, was the result of a series of workshops and charrettes in which residents identified what was essential to them after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Participants were almost universally worried and angry that so much of the state’s traditional and vernacular character had been lost, and they hoped to restore and rebuild in ways that preserved their history and culture.

To this end, the pattern book outlines residential building types and architectural styles that are consistent with Louisiana traditions. This work continued when the firm was asked by Providence Homes and Enterprise Homes to lead the design team for the rebuilding of the Lafitte Public Housing Project in New Orleans after Katrina. Now called Faubourg Lafitte, this new, traditional New Orleans neighborhood is being built in phases, with the first 150 units occupied. By applying the traditional urban and architectural patterns of the adjacent Treme neighborhood, its new houses and apartments create a seamless extension of the traditional city.

The pattern book, which was given away at local Lowe’s home improvement stores, has already gone through two printings.

Building a Foundation

When Gindroz is not running a charrette, writing a pattern book or designing a neighborhood, chances are he’s drawing. Over the years, Gindroz’ evocative ink line drawings of buildings and towns, vaulted ceilings and other Classical details proved to be so popular that people often asked Gindroz if he would sell them, but he was never interested. One day, his wife Marilyn suggested that he could sell them for a good cause, and the Marilyn and Ray Gindroz Foundation was born.

Through the sale of Gindroz’ original drawings and printed sketchbooks (available online at marilynnandraygindrozfoundation.org), as well as contributions, the foundation funds an annual study travel prize for music and architecture students at Carnegie Mellon. It also provides financial, logistical and teaching support for the Hampton University Architecture Department’s study abroad program. For the past four years the Gindrozes have worked with faculty members on programs in Italy and France. The students draw and analyze traditional urban spaces and meet with traditional architects, including Pier Carlo Bontempi, Leon Krier, and Ariel Balmassiere, as well as local officials and other architects.

Gindroz says he is honored to receive the Clem Labine Award and is especially pleased that his foundation work played a key role in the jury’s selection. “Our foundation is dedicated to promoting ideas about humane urbanism, both through the drawings and the study-abroad programs,” he says. “We do believe that exposure to other cultures is a truly a life-changing experience, and we want to provide those experiences for the next generation of architects.”
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Country Views

A two-story farmhouse grows in Virginia.

The rolling hills and equestrian trails of Virginia's Hunt Country give little clue that the hustle and bustle of Washington, DC, is just one hour's drive away. Here neighborly protocol still supports the long-standing privilege of riders to cross private land adjoining their own, the traditional Virginia farmhouse remains a popular template for new construction, and the Piedmont region provides some of the most spectacular views in the country.

The latter is the backdrop for a new 7,130-sq. ft. house by Barnes Vanze Architects, set on an 80-acre mountain property with long views in all directions. Inspired by the pace of local life, the house is redolent of simpler times; it was conceived as a two-story farmhouse that expanded over time, suggested by telescoping clapboard additions and rustic materials that vary in formality. "The main block—the highest piece—is considered the original farmhouse, then it gradually steps down to a lower brick mass, supposedly added at a later date, then several clapboard additions over a period of time," says Stephen Vanze, partner in charge. "It's really just an interpretation of the way in which these houses in this region were traditionally added on to."

From the orientation of the house to the arrangement of the rooms, the site guided the design program. The first floor master suite, living room, game room, kitchen and mudroom, as well as the four second-floor bedrooms, all have views of the valley below and the Blue Ridge mountain range in the distance; only the dining room remains enclosed. "When we visited the site before anything was built, it was very how this house wanted to be sited," says Vanze. "It is very linear, and arranged to provide a broad range of vantage points, both inside and out. The dining room is different; it is an internal space, where the focus is inward—in the gathering, bringing the family

Top: Set among the rolling hills of Virginia, a new 7,130-sq. ft. house by Barnes Vanze Architects was designed to appear as a traditional farmhouse that was expanded over time with telescoping clapboard additions. All photos: Anne Hochlander, Hochlander Davis Photography
together. I was reminded of that scene from a Virginia Woolf novel, where everyone is focused on the candles in the middle of the dining-room table."

The approach to the house is via a long winding road, which turns 180 degrees back on itself, only revealing the views at the last possible moment. It is one of several devices used to conceal the scale of the house, helping it to appear modest against the landscape and historically accurate. To avoid the appearance of bulk, the "original" portion of the house was designed asymmetrically, while the modest additions break down the massing further. "The intent is not only to make the house seem like it was built over time, but also to make what is a fairly large house seem a lot smaller," says Vanze. "At the front façade, the wing to the right is a master bedroom suite. To contain that, the main mass would have gotten considerably larger. So by taking elements
The open pergola links the main house and guest house without obstructing views; it is decorated with a piece of art from the owner’s collection.

away from the main piece, and turning them into one- or one-and-a-half-story pieces, it breaks down the mass quite a bit.”

From the impression that the family room is a screened-in porch to a kitchen pass-through that could have been a window, the interiors reinforce the historical narrative. The main brick portion of the house features the client’s collection of antique doors and hardware, while the “extensions” are differentiated by variations of hardwood flooring, moldings, wainscoting, furniture and cabinetry, and even scale. “We did everything we could to reinforce that this house was not built all at once,” says Vanze. “That means changing details such as head heights of windows, which are slightly different throughout the house, to suggest that some of the additions were built by a carpenter, rather than designed – which is harder than designing.”

Barnes Vanze worked closely with landscape architect Dana Westring to create intimate outdoor spaces that tie the house to the landscape. Within the mass of the house, these include strategically placed covered porches at either end, and a second-floor screened sleeping porch. “There are really two different ways to make outdoor spaces,” says Vanze, “either carving them out of the house or using the mass of the house to create the edges of rooms. We did both here.”

To ensure that the views from the house remain unobstructed, the landscape program is set between the structures — a pergola transitions between the formal front garden to the rear pool and entertaining area, and the nearby detached guest house, which resembles a small equestrian shed. Garden statuary, antique flower pots and weathervanes link the landscape to the historic detailing of the house.
The pool and outdoor dining room, complete with fireplace, form an outdoor room that can be used for entertaining almost all year round.

“This client was very sensitive to design issues and how they wanted to use the house and how they wanted to entertain,” says Vanze. “And they knew that they wanted the pool to be visually connected to the house, but a separate space. It is always important to us to make outdoor rooms that are really extensions of the house, and these particular spaces are used a lot.”

Completed in 2009, the house appears as natural to the landscape as the hill it stands on. “It is as though the house and land expanded and grew together,” says Vanze. – Lynne Lavelle

Web Extra: For additional photos of this project, go to www.period-homes.com/extras/SeptemberBarnesVanze.htm.
Georgian Approach

A Georgian-style residence takes shape in Houston.

When a retired couple living in Houston, TX, wanted more space for their visiting children and grandchildren, they couldn’t decide whether to build a new house or remodel their existing home. The house was located on a wooded site in Hunters Creek Village — one of five villages within the Memorial area west of downtown Houston. Although within the city limits, these villages operate autonomously with individualized rules and regulations. Therefore, building a new house means contending with strict building codes.

After deliberating for a year, the couple selected L. Barry Davidson Architects to design a house in the English Georgian style. “The clients had a large, beautiful lot but they had been living in a very small house that was really in disrepair and wasn’t architecturally noteworthy,” says principal Leslie Barry Davidson. “The lot is 25,000-sq.ft. and the building codes stipulated that we could only cover up 25 percent of the lot with the footprint of the new house, although that doesn’t include the driveway and terrace.

“The clients were getting older and they didn’t want to walk up stairs to reach their bedroom. So while we designed the main portion to be a standard Georgian house, the first-floor master bedroom suite rises one-and-a-half stories.”

The footprint, which includes the terrace, takes up nearly the entire length of the rectangular site with required 15-ft. side setbacks. The height of the home was restricted to 35 ft. and because of frequent flooding in the area the house was raised over two feet from grade level. A driveway leading to the garage on the north side of the house curves around existing trees while concealing the garage doors from the street view — another stipulation of the building code.

“The design process was lengthy because we tried very hard to nail down as many details as possible before bidding,” says Davidson. “We find that if we don’t make all the selections ahead, it means that the house is not on the ‘thread’ that we continually pin everything back to. These clients wanted to achieve as authentic a Georgian house as possible, so we picked the windows, hardware and all the decorative elements to go with a strictly Georgian theme. If we stay on the thread during the design phases, it becomes our guiding light.”

Top: This new 9,000-sq.ft. residence in Houston, TX, designed by L. Barry Davidson Architects, utilizes period-appropriate materials and details to create an authentic Georgian-style residence. All photos: DM Photography
The main façade features a series of hipless gabled roofs with charcoal slate tiles and copper step flashings, both of which were supplied by Houston, TX-based David Alvarez Sheet Metal, and are accompanied with twin symmetrical brick chimneys topped with English chimney pots. Heavy cast-stone cornices with dentil moldings complement the lintels and keystones above traditional metal-clad, double-hung wood windows (manufactured by Dubuque, IA-based Eagle Window & Door) with raised-paneled operable shutters. Between the solid hand-molded bricks, which were manufactured by Salem, VA-based Old Virginia Brick, the concave mortar joints contain grapevine tooling, a detail Davidson notes is historically accurate to the style. An arched cast-stone pediment, pilasters and rectangular wall panels form an exterior vestibule over a formal front entry.

“The design of the fanlight from the front entry came from an English pattern book and the divisions that create the pattern are made of wood,” says Davidson. “The contractor was challenged by that because it was so intricate. It would have been easier to make the fanlight with leaded glass instead.”

In the interior, the lower level of the two-story portion of the house is organized with a central hall leading to primary living spaces. On either side of the grand staircase, the living and dining rooms are identically sized and detailed to create symmetry. Both rooms contain dentil crown molding, raised-paneled wainscoting, wide hickory floor boards and Rojo Alacante marble fireplace surrounds. Even the placement of windows and built-in cabinets is the same.

Towards the rear, the kitchen, breakfast and family rooms are separated from the formal spaces with a bar and butler’s pantry. Wide-plank flooring, supplied by Houston, TX-based Schenck & Company, was used in the family room, where the simple fireplace mantel and moldings create a casual atmosphere. The beams of the 11-ft.-high ceiling break up the length of the room. French doors and floor-to-ceiling windows on the east side of the room allow for ample natural light.
French doors, large windows and a terrace at the rear are positioned to take advantage of the English garden views.

Light as well as views of the terrace with Doric columns and the garden beyond. A mahogany-paneled library south of the family room leads to the private spaces in the south wing.

A large maple butcher block island serves as the focal point of the kitchen and is complemented with green granite countertops, subway tiles, raised-panel cabinetry and brass hardware. The kitchen opens to the breakfast room with a pass-through counter and to the family room with a shuttered opening. The breakfast room’s headboard wainscoting and slate flooring, as well as its bay window, which is visible through the kitchen opening, unite the two spaces. “The clients wanted the kitchen to be open to the breakfast and family rooms, but because this is a traditional house we didn’t want an open floor plan,” says Davidson. “The shutters close off the kitchen so when there’s a formal event guests cannot look into the kitchen from the family, living and dining rooms.”

The mudroom entry hall features wide flat-board paneling and simple molding to evoke a casual country atmosphere.
The 11-ft.-high ceiling in the family room features structural support beams encased with mahogany.

A guest suite and the master suite are located on the lower level of the south wing and feature high vaulted ceilings. The utility areas, such as the garage, mud room, laundry area, work room and an additional powder room, occupy the opposite wing. On the second level, four bedrooms with en-suite baths, a study room and an office surround a large game room. A play room above the south wing is equipped with a small stage area for the clients' young grandchildren.

After a close collaboration between client and architect, the success of the design was highlighted when it was included in AIA Houston's house tour. "This was a very challenging project," says Davidson. "It was really exciting to work with a couple who really understood and loved the design concept. They worked with us to make selections that stayed within the integrity of the theme for the home. They stayed on the Georgian 'thread' and that was very rewarding for us. It's a beautiful house that has great light, colors and enjoyable lovely spaces." — Annabel Hsin

The library, located in the south wing, contains mahogany paneling and a coffered ceiling.
Andrew Skurman Architects designs a Neo-Georgian townhouse in San Francisco.

The concept, at first blush, appears to be a bit of a non sequitur: the creation of a Neoclassical city house, not in Boston, New York or Washington, DC, but in the center of San Francisco, renowned for its exuberant displays of Victorian ornament. The house features a row of Doric columns, a broken-arch pediment that frames the front door and a series of alternating peaked and arched lintels on the second floor windows that all boldly promote a style rarely seen in residences in this city. The architect, Andrew Skurman of Andrew Skurman Architects, says, “This may be the first house with columns built in San Francisco in 50 years.”

As with all unusual projects, it begins with a story. “We were commissioned by a young, single man to build a townhouse on Jackson Street in Pacific Heights,” says Skurman. “It’s a remarkable site – the front of the lot faces Alta Plaza while the rear overlooks the San Francisco Bay. It was a very rare opportunity to build a new house in San Francisco, and we were excited about the chance.”

Pacific Heights is an amalgam of many architectural styles, often closely juxtaposed. Skurman says that the firm drew from elements found throughout the neighborhood, as well as historical precedent, to bridge the gap between the traditional and the contemporary. A non-descript 1960s house on the site was torn down, and the choice of Georgian styling was determined by the close proximity of the abutting buildings. “To the west is a traditional Georgian style apartment building, and a sleek modern home with piers supporting a large overhang to the east,” says Skurman. “I’m a big believer in houses fitting into the context of a neighborhood, and this house has a great conversation with its two abutters with the modern cantilevering on one side and the Classical elegance on the other.”

Top: The family room and kitchen of this new townhouse in San Francisco designed by Andrew Skurman Architects lead to a terrace overlooking Alta Plaza. All photos: Matthew Millman
Skurman says that designing a new townhouse in a way that reflects upon both of these adjacent structures was a challenge. "The modern townhome had incorporated a deep inset terrace on its front façade that relates well to the double-height colonnade we designed for the front façade," he says. "In order to relate to the apartment building and other contextual aspects throughout the neighborhood, we chose an antique Cush brick in a Flemish bond pattern and Georgian detailing on the exterior of the townhouse."

Goals for the design included accommodating the client eventually raising a family and providing sufficient garage space for the client to work on his cars and motorcycles. The firm didn’t want to encroach on the back garden and its views by pushing out the garage in that direction. "We spent a great deal of time reflecting on how to accomplish this, and then I had a moment of inspiration: the LaGrange Terrace rowhouses on Lafayette Street in New York City," says Skurman. "I was a student at Cooper Union, and I walked by them frequently." Skurman also drew references from the Roper house in Charleston, SC.

"Ultimately, we pushed the garage out to the front of the building, into the yard, and used it as a plinth to support the two-story columns," says Skurman. "Our twist is that instead of a solid roof, we specified an open pergola that permits sunlight into the upper bedrooms. This is a departure from the solid roofs, in the New York or Charleston examples, wherein the upper floors are somewhat shielded by the overhang."

It is this open pergola that is perhaps the most unique characteristic of the dwelling, and Skurman’s play on Classicism. He says that a townhouse of this style would traditionally have a solid roof overhanging the outdoor terrace, but due to the northern California climate, a trellis was designed to sit atop the double-height colonnade. Due in part to the local building codes and close proximity to neighboring structures, the trellis was constructed out of powder-coated aluminum, a fire resistant product.

The front door, with a broken pediment as the focal point, was inspired by the George F. Baker house in New York City.
The scale of the terrace echoes the townhouse style prevalent in Charleston, SC. The pergola atop the colonnade allows light to enter the townhouse.

Skurman and his firm, who are well known for their interpretations of Classicism, then created the finer points of the interior and exterior detailing. “It’s not a large home, more of a jewel box,” says Skurman. “We referenced some of our favorite Classical structures in the design. Several of the exterior details and materials, including the front entry and exterior light fixtures, were inspired by the George F. Baker house in New York City, designed by Delano and Aldrich, and the ironwork of the front gates also features classic Greek key details that relate well to the Georgian character of the town house.”

The interior is equally Classical in style. One of Skurman’s hallmarks is the placement of an elegant stairwell, and this dwelling is no exception. Here, it spirals up through three floors and is lit from above by a circular skylight. A single brass chain drops from its center, with a lantern strategically placed at each landing, resulting in a graceful, uncluttered solution for nighttime illumination.

The formal living room, resplendent with carefully selected art, is located at the rear of the second floor, while the third floor is reserved for the main living areas, and here, the kitchen and family rooms are connected as one open room that then leads to the south-facing outdoor terrace overlooking Alta Plaza. At the front of the house on the third floor are two smaller guest bedrooms each with en suite baths. The master suite is located at the back of the house away from the street, giving it more privacy and softer light, as it faces north with a view of the bay.

Skurman states that his love of Classical design for domestic applications is the muse that drives him, and this house in particular was a commission of which he is exceptionally proud. (The house will be featured in a monograph of the firm forthcoming from Princeton Architectural Press.) “I believe in a different solution for each person within the unique harmony of Classicism,” says Skurman. “The project was a great success on all levels – we were very pleased to be able to produce a beautiful addition to the streetscape in San Francisco.” – Dan Cooper
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Designer & custom fabricator of ornamental metalwork: benches, columns, balustrades, lighting, gazebos, fencing, grilles, doors, windows, skylights, finials & more; cast iron, bronze, aluminum & wrought iron/steel; many styles; restoration services.

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www.hamptonconservatories.com
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Designer, manufacturer & installer of traditional English conservatories, sunrooms, pool enclosures, greenhouses, garden rooms & skylights.

Renaissance Conservatories manufactured this conservatory for a client in New Jersey.

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Wiemann Metalcraft
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This ornate door handle and matching escutcheon are the work of E.R. Butler.

This door-knob, model #4103S, was fabricated by Brusso.

"Invisible" storm windows from Allied Window can be made to match any traditional window style.

Ball & Ball Hardware restored this decorative door pull.

The subtle imperfections and distortions of Restoration Glass from Bendheim create historically accurate detailing in traditional homes.

Arch Angle provided the storm windows and doors for this residence.
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Hamilton Sinkler  
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www.hamiltonsinkler.com  
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Manufacturer of decorative registers & vents, door & window hardware, cabinet hardware, bathroom accessories & more: brass, bronze & nickel; custom work.

HeartWood Fine Windows & Doors  
585-254-8191; Fax: 585-254-1760  
www.heartwoodwindowsanddoors.com  
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These windows were custom made by Marvin.

Kayne & Son fabricated the historically styled hardware for this custom door.

Parrett Windows & Doors offers a variety of historical wood windows.

This cast-bronze window from Historical Arts & Casting is available in two sizes.

This traditional door set and steeple-tip door hinge are available from House of Antique Hardware in nine finishes.
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**Presenters:** Tony Bartorillo, CSI, CCRP, Marvin Windows and Doors of New York, Cortland, N.Y.

David Blackwell, project manager, Lend Lease Project Management and Construction, Syracuse, N.Y.

William (Bill) T. Connor, vice president, Lend Lease Project Management and Construction, Syracuse, N.Y.

Robert Barraco, superintendent of schools, Richfield Springs CSD, Richfield Springs, N.Y.

**Moderator:** Judy L. Hayward, education director, Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference and Traditional Building Conference Series, Restore Media, LLC, Washington, D.C.

**Differences of Opinion: How Do You Balance ‘Compatibility’ and ‘Differentiation’ When You’re Adding On to an Historic Structure?**

September 27, 2011, 2 p.m. ET, 90 minutes, 1.5 HSW LU

**Learning Objectives** After the session, participants will be able to do the following:

- Apply the concept of “compatible yet differentiated” to work that needs to comply with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standard No. 9.
- Break down the Secretary of the Interior’s Standard No. 9 for clients, explaining options and requirements to them.
- Compare and contrast additions that replicate or are differentiated from a building’s historic core.
- Select materials more appropriately on the way to designing more effective additions.

**Presenters:**

Robert D. Loversidge, Jr., FAIA, president, CEO, Schooley Caldwell Associates, Columbus, Ohio

John Sandor, architectural historian, Technical Preservation Services, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

Cynthia Roubik, Architect III, Commission on Chicago Landmarks, Chicago

**Moderator:** Judy L. Hayward, education director, Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference and Traditional Building Conference Series, Restore Media, LLC, Washington, D.C.

**Heaven Sent: An Historic Church Seizes a Window of Opportunity**

November 15, 2011, 2 p.m. ET, 90 minutes, 1.5 HSW LU

**Learning Objectives** After the session, participants will be able to do the following.

- Manage a major window reconstruction, including establishing the project team and creating effective work processes.
- Explain the requirements and techniques for conducting physical inspections, surveys and hand measurements used in the replication of large windows and doors.
- Gain a working knowledge of appropriate materials, wood decay and moisture meters, and emergency stabilization of existing large window and door frames.
- Discuss similarities and differences between the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and the ICOMOS Principles for Preservation.

**Presenters:**

Roderick J. MacNeil, M.Arch., FRAIC, president, Jerry MacNeil Architects Limited, Halifax, Nova Scotia


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www.spiral-staircases.com
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Goddard Spiral Stairs railings were designed and fabricated by Gold Coast Metal Works.

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Designed by Curtis and Whynham Architects, this forged-bronze grille was fabricated by Wiemann Metalcraft.
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**Calendar of Events**

**NATIONAL PRESERVATION INSTITUTE: HISTORIC PRESERVATION SEMINARS, Now - May 2012.** The National Preservation Institute will conduct a series of training seminars for professionals in management, development and historic, cultural and environmental preservation in cities across the country. Seminars, case studies and small group exercises will highlight state-of-the-art practices in historic preservation. For more information, visit www.npi.org or email info@npi.org.

**WRIGHT WAY PENNSYLVANIA TOUR: FALLINGWATER & MORE, October 1-4, 2011.** The Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust will conduct a private in-depth tour of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Fallingwater in Mill Run, PA. The tour will also include the Kentuck Knob (1954) and Duncan houses (1957), two of Wright’s last residential commission, as well as nearby historic homes, neighborhoods and art museums in Pittsburgh. For more information, visit www.gowright.org.

**GREENBUILD “NEXT” 2011, October 4-7, 2011.** The annual Greenbuild international conference and expo will be held in Toronto, Canada. This year’s theme will celebrate new innovative ideas in green building design and will feature the world’s largest expo devoted to green building products and services as well as LEED workshops taught by industry experts. For more information, visit www.greenbuildexpo.org.

**ICAA GUIDED TOUR OF PRIVATE PALACES, VILLAS AND GARDENS OF VENICE AND THE VENETO, October 9-16, 2011.** Following the 500th anniversary of the birth of Andrea Palladio, ICAA will host a seven-day guided tour of influential Palladian palaces, villas and gardens in Venice and the Veneto. Event highlights include a private tour of Palladio’s Vicenza, a UNESCO World Heritage site. For more information, visit www.classictist.org.

**APT CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 11-16, 2011.** The Association for Preservation Technology International will host its annual conference at the Fairmont Empress Hotel and Victoria Conference Centre in Victoria, Canada. The event will feature workshops, symposiums, exhibits and field sessions focusing on the theme, “Heritage on the Edge: Sustaining Buildings, Landscapes and Communities.” For conference updates, visit www.apti.org.

**NATIONAL PRESERVATION CONFERENCE, October 19-22, 2011.** The National Trust for Historic Preservation will host its annual conference in Buffalo, NY. The event’s theme, “Alternating Currents,” will examine the fluctuating direction of preservation. For more information, visit www.preservationnation.org.

**TRADITIONAL BUILDING CONFERENCE SERIES: NEW YORK CITY, October 21-22, 2011.** The third installment of the new Traditional Building Conference Series, the regional event for design and construction professionals working in restoration, renovation, preservation and traditionally styled new construction, will be held in New York City at the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen. For more information, go to www.traditionalbuildingshow.com.

**ASLA 2011 ANNUAL MEETING & EXPO, October 30 - November 2, 2011.** The American Society of Landscape Architects will host its annual meeting at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, CA. Participants will have the chance to earn up to 21 professional development hours through workshops and education sessions. For more information, visit www.asla.org.

**BUILD BOSTON CONVENTION AND TRADESHOW, November 16-18, 2011.** The annual Build Boston convention and tradeshow will be held at the Seaport World Trade Center in Boston, MA. The event features exhibits, symposiums and workshops with the opportunity to earn continuing-education credits and AIA LUs. For event updates, visit www.buildboston.com.

**2012 PALLADIO AWARDS DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS, November 23, 2011.** The annual Palladio Awards, honoring excellence in traditional architecture, are sponsored by Traditional Building and Period Homes magazines and the Traditional Building Conference Series. For more information, go to www.palladioawards.com.

**WOODWORKING CLASSES.** The North Bennet Street School holds full-time woodworking courses – including fine carpentry and preservation carpentry – in Boston, MA. Class size is limited to a maximum of 13 people. The school provides bench space, materials and shop supplies for most workshops. To register and pay online, visit www.nibs.edu.
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The central website for historically inspired products and services on the internet includes products used for restoration, renovation and new construction. There's more information and links to historical products than you'll find on any other site.
- Searchable Product Database with 112 product categories and 371 companies
- 162 online product brochures
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- E-mail order form for Product Literature

www.period-homes.com
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Board & Beam
860-868-6789; Fax: 860-868-0721
www.boardandbeam.com
Washington Depot, CT 06792
Supplier of antique barns, lumber & flooring: hand-hewn beams; Shaker-style tables in oak, white & yellow pine & chestnut; restoration of Colonial structures.

Hochstetler Milling, Ltd.
419-368-0008; Fax: 419-368-6080
www.hochstetlermilling.net
Loudonville, OH 44842
Supplier of new barn timbers: oak up to 40 ft. long; planed & rough sawn; 2x6 & 1x6 tongue-&-groove knotty pine.

Liberty Head Post & Beam
802-434-2120; Fax: 802-434-5666
www.libertyheadpostandbeam.com
Huntington, VT 05462
Custom designer of timber-frame houses, barns & outbuildings authentically joined in the Vermont tradition: new structures & historic renovation.

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802-382-9082; Fax: 802-382-9084
www.connorbuilding.com
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Designer & manufacturer of mill-built architecture for classic American homes: Colonial, Federal, Georgian, Greek Revival, Shingle, Bungalow & Colonial Revival styles; interiors included; barns & outbuildings; nationwide shipping.

Country Carpenters, Inc.
860-228-2276; Fax: 860-228-5106
www.countrycarpenters.com
Hebron, CT 06248
Manufacturer of New England-style post-&-beam carriage houses, garden houses, sheds & country barns: pre-cut & -engineered for assembly by either the firm or a professional carpenter.

Longwood Antique Woods
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www.longwoodantiquewood.com
Lexington, KY 40505
Supplier of antique flooring & vintage building materials: hand-hewn barn frames for home conversions, antique log homes & cabins; large variety of timbers & beams; antique stall doors from famous Kentucky farms; reclaimed brick.

Country Carpenters
860-643-1148; Fax: 860-643-1150
www.countrycarpenters.com
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Sand Creek Post & Beam
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www.sandcreekpostandbeam.com
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South County Post & Beam
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www.scpb.com
West Kingston, RI 02892
Full-service timber-frame company: designer, producer & installer of timber-frame homes, barns, structures & components; frame & panel packages available nationally; wood flooring; since 1976.

Free State Timbersmiths
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www.freetimbersmiths.com
Stilwell, KS 66085
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www.spiral-staircases.com
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Custom fabricator of all types of spiral stairs: steel, steel/wood or all-wood; custom railing & wood stair parts.

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Supplier of new barn timbers: oak up to 40 ft. long; planed & rough sawn; 2x6 & 1x6 tongue- & groove knotty pine.

Lumber Liquidators, Inc.
800-HARDWOOD; Fax: 757-566-0621
www.lumberliquidators.com
Toano, VA 23168
Manufacturer of hardwood flooring: exotic & domestic wood; Bellawood comes with a 50-year warranty; cork flooring; grilles; maple & cherry butcher blocks; 75 locations nationwide.

Palladio Mouldings
888-668-5348; Fax: 905-305-0001
www.palladiomouldings.com
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www.poxywood.com
Martinsville, VA 24115
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www.hwpf.com
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212-226-5147; Fax: 212-941-1836
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New York, NY 10013
Custom manufacturer of rolling ladders: ash, oak, birch, maple, cherry, mahogany, walnut & teak; for libraries, offices, stores, wine cellars & lofts; local installation.

This floral wood panel is one of many woodcarvings available from Enkeboll Designs.

This guest house in Sagaponack, NY, features reclaimed mushroom wood walls and beams from Heritage Wide Plank Flooring.

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Manufacturer of storm windows: interior, magnetic; Thermal, Acoustic, Preservation & Pro series; installs in existing window cavity.

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Innerglass Window Systems
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www.stormwindows.com
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www.seekirchersteelwindow.com
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www.carlsonsbarnwood.com
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www.mountainlumber.com
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860-655-5259; No fax
www.oldwoodworkshop.com
Pomfret Center, CT 06259
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Westlake Village, CA 91362
Custom designer & manufacturer of lighting: chandeliers, sconces, pendants & lanterns; both gas and electric available; French, Tuscan, Spanish Revival, Tudor, contemporary, antique reproduction & more.

The Napoleon House gas light fixture is available from Bevolo.

Architectural Area Lighting’s Cube Indirect is available with efficient LEDs, induction and metal halide sources.
Green Exteriors – Roofing, Siding & Decking

Advantage Trim & Lumber Co., Inc.
716-827-3916; Fax: 716-827-3916
www.advantage lumber.com
Buffalo, NY 14203
Supplier of Ipe decking, hardwood lumber & flooring; domestic & exotic wood species.

AZEK Building Products Inc.
877-275-2935; Fax: 570-504-1215
www.azek.com
Mount, PA 18507
Manufacturer of low-maintenance exterior building products: AZEK Trim, AZEK Mouldings & AZEK Deck.

Bear Creek Lumber
800-597-7191; Fax: 509-997-2040
www.bearcreeklumber.com
Winthrop, WA 98862
Supplier of wood flooring, paneling, roofing, fencing, new & recycled timbers & decking; hand-split, machine-cut & fancy-cut butt fir - & rot-retardant-treated shakes & shingles; quarter-sawn clapboard & siding; post & beam.

Carlson’s Barnwood Co.
309-522-1550; Fax: 309-522-5123
www.carlsons barnwood.com
Cambridge, IL 61238
Supplier of recycled barn-wood planks, re-milled antique flooring; dimensional lumber & timbers in various shades & types; cupolas, porch poles, siding, milled & barn lumber, flooring & paneling in pine & oak.

Cedar Shake & Shingle Bureau
604-820-7700; Fax: 604-820-0266
www.cedarbureau.org
Sumas, WA 98295
Trade association: literature, design & application data for cedar roofing & siding; information on pressure impregnation for preservative & fire-retardant-treated materials & 20- to 25-year limited warranty.

Westinghouse Lighting Corp.
800-999-2226; Fax: 215-464-4115
www.westinghouselighting.com
Philadelphia, PA 19154
Manufacturer of compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs): integral-ballast, screw-in & plug-in CFL replacements; dimming, 3-way, photo-sensing, full-spectrum, globe, interior & exterior flood CFLs; various sizes & wattages.

A Cedar Shake & Shingle Bureau member provided the cedar roofing for this house; the shakes are lightweight and have a high insulation value.

Chestnut Specialists, Inc.
860-283-4209; Fax: Same as phone
www.chestnutspec.com
Plymouth, CT 06782
Supplier of re-milled flooring from antique barn lumber: authentic antique planks, hewn beams, weathered siding, original flooring, antique heavy timber & salvaged logs for milling.

CorrectPorch
877-332-5877; No fax
www.correctporch.com
Biddeford, ME 04005
Manufacturer of tongue- & groove composite porch flooring; combines the traditional look of wood with the durability & low maintenance of composite material.

Durable Slate Co., The
800-666-7445; Fax: 614-299-7100
www.durable slate.com
Columbus, OH 43201
Supplier of salvaged slate & clay tile roofing materials: can match colors & styles no longer produced.

Durale Slate installed this slate roof using reclaimed Vermont semi-weathered gray-green and purple slates.

GAF
973-628-3000; Fax: 973-628-3865
www.gaf.com
Wayne, NJ 07470
Manufacturer of roofing: Timberline fiberglass asphalt shingle with wood look; SlateLine imitation-slate shingles; Country Mansion shingles with natural-stone or slate look; metal roofing; stone veneer.

Gladding, McBean, Div. of Pacific Coast Bldg.
800-776-1133; Fax: 916-772-6718
www.gladdingmcbean.com
Roseville, CA 95674
Manufacturer of clay roof tile, terra cotta, chimney tops & caps, cornices, balustrades, piazza floor tile & garden pottery: CAD drawings; color matching.

Gladding, McBean’s 18-in. Cordova Franciscan Blend Muddles was used on this building.

This multi-arm Art Deco chandelier is one of many found in the antique collection of Remains Lighting.

This multi-arm Art Deco chandelier is one of many found in the antique collection of Remains Lighting.
Greenstone Slate Co., Inc.
802-287-3333; Fax: 802-287-5720
www.greenstoneslate.com
Poultney, VT 05764

Quarrier of Vermont roofing slate; wide range of sizes, colors & weights; slate matching, graduated roofs, blending & contrasting; all effects.

Greenstone Slate offers energy-saving roofing such as this natural Vermont slate installation with integrated solar panels.

InSpire Roofing Products
866-288-2726; Fax: 800-709-9109
www.inspireroofing.com
Wixom, MI 48393

Supplier of roofing: 100% recyclable blend of dolomitic limestone & synthetic resins; 6 profiles; Class-A fire, Class-4 hail & 110-mph wind uplift ratings; transferable 50-year limited warranty.

Composite slate roofing from InSpire Roofing was used on this roof.

Liberty Cedar
800-882-3227; Fax: 401-789-0320
www.libertycedar.com
W. Kingston, RI 02892

Supplier of decay-resistant wood roofing & siding: tapersawn, hand-split & resawn shakes; many patterns; custom runs; western red & Alaska yellow cedar, redwood, Douglas fir & mahogany; historical projects.

Liberty Cedar
800-882-3227; Fax: 401-789-0320
www.libertycedar.com
W. Kingston, RI 02892

Supplier of decay-resistant wood roofing & siding: tapersawn, hand-split & resawn shakes; many patterns; custom runs; western red & Alaska yellow cedar, redwood, Douglas fir & mahogany; historical projects.

Ludowici Roof Tile, Inc.
800-945-8453; Fax: 740-342-0025
www.ludowici.com
New Lexington, OH 43764

Manufacturer of clay roof tile; wide variety of standard shapes, fittings, sizes & colors; matte, gloss, weathered, fire-flashed, sanded & combed finishes; ceramic slate replicas & slate color matching; custom colors & shapes.

Ludowici Roof Tile's lightweight ceramic shake tile is designed to look like wood and carries a 75-year warranty.

NIKO Contracting Co., Inc.
412-687-1517; Fax: 412-687-7969
www.nikococontracting.com
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Nationwide contractor, fabricator & installer of architectural sheet metal & roofing: slate, tile, metal & other roofing; ornamental ceilings, cresting, finials, cornices, cupolas, domes, steeples & snowguards.

Reclaimed Roofs supplied a blend of new Vermont Gray and Gray-Black slate for this roof in Chadds Ford, PA.

Reclaimed Roofs, Inc.
302-369-9187; Fax: 302-397-2742
www.reclainedroofs.com
Greenville, DE 19807

Supplier of hard-to-find roofing slate & tile: reclaimed; clay & concrete tile; rigid mineral fiber shingles; matching services.

Renaissance Roofing provides salvaged clay tile for new construction, historical restoration and repair.

Renaissance Roofing, Inc.
800-699-3695; Fax: 815-547-1425
www.claytileroof.com
Rockford, IL 61105

Supplier of clay, concrete & salvaged tile; new and salvaged slate roofing materials; database with over 2.5 million sq. ft. of materials available. Experienced in all phases of roof restoration.

Santafe Tile Corp.
888-305-8453; Fax: 305-888-0050
www.santafetile.com
Miami, FL 33178

Manufacturer of clay brick pavers, clay roof tile & roof tile accessories: matte & gloss finishes; variety of shapes; more than 50 different colors plus custom colors.

Energy-rated roof tiles are available from Santafe Tile Corp. in a variety of finishes.

Green Mechanical Systems & Plumbing

ClimateMaster
405-745-6000; Fax: 405-745-6058
www.climatemaster.com
Oklahoma City, OK 73179

Manufacturer of ground-source heat pumps; for commercial & residential use.

TOTO USA, Inc.
888-295-8134; Fax: 770-282-0002
www.totousa.com
Morrow, GA 30260

Manufacturer of energy-efficient plumbing: water-saving toilets & more.

Unico System, Inc.
800-527-0896; Fax: 314-457-9000
www.unico-system.com
Saint Louis, MO 63111

Supplier of mini-duct system: has small flexible hoses for retrofitting HVAC systems into old buildings.

Unico's small-duct, high-velocity HVAC system takes less than 1/2 the space of a traditional system, making it ideal for historic buildings.
Green Structural Systems & Insulation

FischerSips Inc.
800-792-7477, 50
1843 Northwestern Pkwy.
Louisville, KY 40203
Top quality panels sheathed with OSB, drywall, fiberbond, pine T1-11, or pine tongue-and-groove.

Major Industries, Inc.
888-759-2678; Fax: 715-848-3336
www.major Skylights.com
Wausau, WI 54401
Manufacturer of skylights & translucent insulated wall panels: skylights can be glazed in glass, acrylic, polycarbonate twin-wall & translucent fiberglass; thermofomed acrylic domes (such as pyramids) & more.

Premier Building Systems
800-275-7086; Fax: 253-926-3992
www.pbsips.com
Tacoma, WA 98424
Manufacturer of structural and non-structural EPS Foam panels for floors, walls, and roofs. Provides fast, efficient construction of highly insulated, insect-repellent exterior walls and roofs.

Green Paints & Finishes

American Clay Enterprises, Inc.
866-404-1634, Fax: 505-244-9332
www.americandclay.com
Albuquerque, NM 87113
Supplier of finishes for walls & ceilings: made of clays, aggregates & natural pigments; alternative to plaster & gypsum; non-flammable, resists mold; Marrittimo finish made of reclaimed shells.

Benjamin Moore & Co.
800-344-0400; Fax: 201-474-1117
www.benjaminmoore.com
Montvale, NJ 07645
Supplier of Eco-Spec low-VOC, 100% acrylic, interior latex paint: available in primer/sealer, flat, eggshell & semi-gloss.

Cohalan Company, Inc.
302-684-3299; Fax: 302-684-5974
www.keimmineralsystem.com
Lewes, DE 19958
Supplier of Keim mineral silicate paint: produces organic liquid stone' finish; exterior & interior products; 370 standard plus custom colors.

Dumond Chemicals, Inc.
212-869-6350; Fax: 212-764-5762
www.peelaway.com
New York, NY 10036
Manufacturer of paint removers: Peel Away 6 & 7 made from biodegradable materials; contain non-hazardous dibasic ester solvent rather than methylene chloride or caustic hydrofluoric acid.

Finest Paints of Europe
800-332-1556; Fax: 802-457-3984
www.finestpaintsofeurope.com
Woodstock, VT 05091
Importer & distributor of oil-based paints from Holland: full line of finishes ranging from matte wall & ceiling paint to brilliant gloss enamel; custom tinting.

Old Fashioned Milk Paint Co., The
866-350-MILK, Fax: 978-448-2754
www.milkpaint.com
Groton, MA 01450
Manufacturer & worldwide distributor of genuine milk paint: all natural & zero VOCs; 20 historic colors; comes in powder form; add water & mix to desired consistency; SafePaint for walls now available; since 1974.

Real Milk Paint Co. LLC, The
1-800-339-9748, Fax: 215-538-5435
www.realmilkpaint.com
Quakertown, PA 18951
Manufacturer of authentic milk paint & pure tung-oil wood finishes: paint in 28 colors; tung oil can be used on stone & metal.

Sutherland Welles Ltd.
800-322-1245; Fax: 802-635-2722
www.tungoofinish.com
North Hyde Park, VT 05665
Manufacturer of pure, low-toxic polymerized tung-oil finishes: for wood or any porous surface; creates a hand-rubbed, old-world patina; easy to apply & maintain; extensive technical support.

Green Adhesives, Caulking & Sealants

Abatron, Inc.
800-445-1734; Fax: 262-653-2019
www.abatron.com
Kenosha, WI 53144
**Manufacturer of Siroflex Compound**

Supplier of reclaimed & recycled lumber: wide-plank flooring in various species up to 20 ft. long; Signature brand antique plank in tobacco barn oak, chestnut, mushroom wood & other species; hand-hewn & sawn beams up to 42 ft.

**Green Glue Vents**

Supplier of vintage wood: antique & salvaged timbers & boards; antique wood flooring; random-width & wide-board flooring.

**Armacell LLC**

Supplier of low-VOC spray adhesive; hexane- & toluene-free Armadex® 520 BLV; used with HVAC sheet & roll insulation; no chlorinated solvents or ozone-depleting compounds.

**Green Glue Co.**

Supplier of noise-reduction products: Green glue compound & sealant; noise-proofing clips; joist tape.

**Siroflex**

Manufacturer of caulks & sealants: over 100 stock colors available.

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**Antique & Vintage Woods of America**

Supplier of reclaimed & recycled lumber: wide-plank flooring in various species up to 20 ft. long; Signature brand antique plank in tobacco barn oak, chestnut, mushroom wood & other species; hand-hewn & sawn beams up to 42 ft.

**Antique Lumber Corp.**

Manufacturer of wide-plank flooring & paneling: crafted from hand-selected old growth & antique woods; widths up to 20 in. & lengths up to 16 ft.; antique oak, chestnut & heart pine; original-surface barn siding & milled barn siding.

**Architectural Salvage Network**

Nationwide locating service for architectural antiques & salvaged building materials.

**Bathroom Machineries, DEA**

Supplier of Early American & Victorian bathroom fixtures & accessories: antique & reproduction bathroom fixtures; tubs, high-tank toilets, pedestal sinks, medicine cabinets, mirrors & more; antique lighting.

**Board & Beam**

Supplier of antique barns, lumber & flooring: hand-hewn beams; Shaker-style tables in oak, white & yellow pine & chestnut; restoration of Colonial structures.

**Carlson’s Barnwood Co.**

Supplier of recycled barn-wood planks, re-milled antique flooring, dimensional lumber & timbers in various shades & types: cupolas, porch poles, siding, milled & barn lumber, flooring & paneling in pine & oak.
Aspers, Associates also barns; oak, chestnut, hardvls; r'eathered flooring.
Manufacturer & materials: u,hite pine, hemlock, heart timber & trim;
rafter, pole rafters & flooring; Supplier 860-283-1209; Supplier Recycled wood, pole rafters,

Chestnut Specialists, Inc.
860-283-4209; Fax; Same as phone www.chesnutspec.com
Plymouth, CT 06782
Supplier of re-milled flooring from antique barn lumber: authentic antique planks, hewn beams, weathered siding, original flooring, antique heavy timber & salvaged logs for milling.

Conklin’s Authentic Antique Barnwood
570-465-3832; Fax: 570-465-3835 www.conklinbarnwood.com Susquehanna, PA 18847

Eco by Cosentino
281-494-7277; Fax: 281-494-7299 www.ecobycosentino.com Stafford, TX 77477
Manufacturer of recycled countertop material: Eco by Cosentino made of 75% recycled materials; mirrors, glass, porcelain & industrial furnace residuals; 10 colors, two textures.

Centre Mills Antique Floors
717-677-9698; Fax: 717-334-6223 www.centremillsantiquefloors.com Aspers, PA 17304
Manufacturer & distributor of wide-plank, wood flooring from antique barns: weathered barn siding, hewn barn timbers; oak, elm, maple & other hardwoods; heart pine flooring from Southern barns; oak, chestnut, walnut & other flooring.

Free State Timbersmiths
913-897-5262; Fax: 913-897-1459 www.freestatetimbersmiths.com Stilwell, KS 66082
Custom fabricator & distributor of timber frames: recycled timbers; trusses; timber-frame restoration.

Conklin’s Authentic Antique Barnwood
570-465-3832; Fax: 570-465-3835 www.conklinbarnwood.com Susquehanna, PA 18847

Chestnut Specialists, Inc.
860-283-4209; Fax; Same as phone www.chesnutspec.com
Plymouth, CT 06782
Supplier of re-milled flooring from antique barn lumber: authentic antique planks, hewn beams, weathered siding, original flooring, antique heavy timber & salvaged logs for milling.

Gavin Historical Bricks Inc.
319-354-5251; Fax: 319-688-3086 www.historicalbricks.com Iowa City, IA 52245
Supplier of authentic antique brick pavers, granite cobblestones, clinker & common brick: custom matching; large quantities; special shapes; hand-molded & face brick; nationwide shipping.

Good Time Stove Co.
413-268-3677; No fax www.goodtimesstore.com Goshen, MA 01032
Supplier of antique kitchen ranges & heating stoves: ca. 1840-1930; restored enamel, cast iron, wood & wood/gas combos; electric conversions; wood- & gas-burning fireplaces & stoves.

House of Antique Hardware
888-223-2545; Fax: 503-233-1312 www.houseofantiqueshardware.com Portland, OR 97232
Supplier of door, window, cabinet, furniture, electrical & bath hardware: original antique & vintage reproductions; Federal, Victorian & Arts & Crafts styles; hardware specialists available to assist with renovation projects.

Longleaf Lumber, LLC
617-871-6611; Fax: 617-871-6615 www.longleaflumber.com Cambridge, MA 02138
Supplier of antique lumber & flooring: wide-board & random-width flooring; stair parts; custom millings; longleaf heart pine, chestnut, antique eastern white pine & other woods; wide-plank & random-width boards; cork flooring.

Longwood Antique Woods
859-233-2268; Fax: 859-455-9629 www.longwoodantiquewoods.com Lexington, KY 40505
Supplier of antique flooring & vintage building materials: hand-hewn barn frames for home conversions, antique log homes & cabins; large variety of timbers & beams; antique stall doors from famous Kentucky farms; reclaimed brick.

Country Road Associates, Ltd.
845-677-6041; Fax: 845-677-6532 www.countryroadassociates.com Millbrook, NY 12545
Supplier of 19th-century reclaimed flooring materials: white pine, hemlock, heart pine, white oak, chestnut & walnut; widths from 3-18 in.; hand-hewn beams & barn siding; cabinetry & farm tables.

Crystal Ash is one of 10 colors available from Eco by Cosentino; the countertop is made of 75% post-consumer recycled materials.

Along with wide-board and random-width flooring, Country Road Associates also supplies antique wood that can be used for cabinets, furniture and paneling.

The Glenwood parlor stove is one of many antique heating stoves available from Good Time Stove.
Pine Hall Brick Co.
800-334-8869; Fax: 336-721-7517
www.pinehallbrick.com
Winston Salem, NC 27105
Manufacturer of pavers, face brick, thin brick & special shapes: 40+ face-brick styles; 60+ clay-paver styles including Rumbled, CityCobble, permeable RainPave & StormPave; since 1922.

Pioneer Millworks
585-924-9970; Fax: 585-924-9962
www.pioneermillworks.com
Farmington, NY 14425
Supplier of custom-sawn & -planed reclaimed timbers: for flooring, trim, doors, stairs, paneling & more; heart pine, Douglas fir, oak & other species.

Recycling The Past
609-660-9790; Fax: 800-878-3251
www.recyclingthepast.com
Barnegat, NJ 08005
Supplier of antiques & salvaged materials: door hardware, wood flooring, ceramic tile, fencing, interior lighting, mantels, bathroom & kitchen sinks, radiators, toilets, architectural antiques, building materials, glass & more.

This historic salvaged sink is one of many items available from Recycling The Past.

Stoneyard.com
978-742-9800; Fax: 978-428-0450
www.stoneyard.com
Littleton, MA 01440
Supplier of reclaimed New England fieldstone: veneers, stone walls & landscaping; veneers are available in 5 different shapes; weathered or natural grain face colors.

The Woods Co.
888-548-7609; Fax: 717-263-9346
www.thewoodscompany.com
Chambersburg, PA 17201
Manufacturer of wide-plank flooring from new wood & re-milled antique wood: heart pine, oak, chestnut & yellow & white pine; surface-textured flooring; antique beams; stair treads & risers, floor vents, siding, paneling & more.

Vintage Log & Lumber, Inc.
304-497-2700; Fax: 304-497-3651
www.vintagelog.com
Renick, WV 24966
Small company specializing in antique hand-hewn log cabins and timber-frame barns: hand-hewn beams, chestnut lumber, antique oak, poplar & pine for flooring & millwork; hand-cut foundation & chimney stone; architectural salvage.

Vintage Timberworks
951-695-1003; Fax: 951-695-9003
www.vintagetimber.com
Temecula, CA 92592
Supplier of recycled & reclaimed old lumber, antique timber, hand-hewn barn beams & boards & salvaged rustic flooring: reclaimed from dismantling antiquated structures throughout the U.S., Canada & Australia; FSC certified.

For a list of LEED Consultants & Architects, go to www.period-homes.com/extras/LEED2011.htm
Contemporary and Timeless

*New Traditional Architecture: Ferguson & Shamamian Architects*
by Mark Ferguson and Oscar Shamamian with Joseph Giovannini
Rizzoli International Publications, New York, NY; 2011
248 pages; hardcover; over 400 full-color photographs and drawings; $75
ISBN 978-0-8478-3545-4

Reviewed by Clem Labine

It requires the hand of an exceptionally artful designer to breathe personality and life into that most intimate of all architectural constructions: the one-family residence. In this stunning monograph of the work of Ferguson & Shamamian Architects, we see the art of architecture practiced at its highest level. Just like such fabled early-20th-century firms as Mellor, Meigs & Howe, Harry T. T. Lindeberg, and Delano & Aldrich, Ferguson & Shamamian Architects has become one of the to “go to” firms for sophisticated clients commissioning finely detailed traditional residences. The proof is beautifully illustrated in this weighty new volume delineating 29 residential masterworks, ranging from new country houses to renovations, additions and city apartments created during 22 years of practice.

Unlike many other top-flight firms, Ferguson & Shamamian does not have a signature design style. Rather, the firm has a signature type of client – clients who are assured enough of their own taste that they want a house that reflects their own personality rather than the ego of their architect. These are also clients with a sense of history and cultural continuity who are looking for a refined house that fits comfortably into its context. Mark Ferguson and Oscar Shamamian see a house as an architectural portrait of the owner, and pride themselves on developing a thorough understanding of the client’s style preferences and lifestyle needs before a line is drawn.

Ferguson and Shamamian look to inspiration from the past as the surest and best way to make modern, functional and handsome architecture. They don’t shrink from using phrases like “humane and beautiful environments” to describe the goals of their work. Like all first-rank traditional architects – starting with Vitruvius and Palladio – Ferguson and Shamamian know that the past can’t be simply copied, but must be continually reinterpreted and adapted to contemporary needs of technology and lifestyles.

They take historical precedents seriously however: The firm’s work never descends into whimsy or ironical references. Rather, the designs demonstrate deep knowledge and respect for a wide range of architectural traditions. Thus, in this monograph you’ll see beautifully realized homes in such modes as Georgian, Colonial Revival, Mediterranean, English Picturesque, Dutch Colonial, Shingle Style, Arts & Crafts, French Provincial – as well as many interpretations of the Classical language. When they modify historical forms, they do it without straying too far from the canonical centerline; in that way they maintain a sense of connection to the past. That’s why all their residences feel comfortable and timeless, yet fresh and contemporary.

One notable feature of Ferguson & Shamamian houses is the rigorous attention paid to the planning and architecture of the interiors. This doubtless reflects the training both principals received early in their careers while working at Parish-Hadley, one of the nation’s top interior design firms. At Parish-Hadley, they were encouraged to indulge their interest in architectural detail – something they were not allowed to do in architecture school.

The interior plans of Ferguson & Shamamian residences frequently exhibit enfilades and the use of Classical symmetry to confer stature and stability on the architectural composition, as well as to establish order and hierarchy. Their interior architecture shows exceptional attention to detail down to the smallest molding. But rather than stiff formal interiors, spaces flow easily into one another, and public rooms open onto piazzas, terraces, lawns and scenic views – providing a bright contemporary feel.

One secret to the visual harmony of the projects presented is the frequent collaboration with other top-flight interior decorators, landscape designers and artisans to ensure that the tiniest detail relates to the composition as a whole. As a result, the houses all have a feeling of “rightness” about them, starting with great sensitivity to the site and character of a place, and extending down to the appropriateness of the baseboards. Major collaborators for each project are credited in an appendix.

This beautifully produced monograph can certainly qualify as a coffee-table book – if you have a large coffee table! The book is big (13 x 15 in.) and heavy (7 lbs.). The color photographs are gorgeous and give an excellent sense of each residence, inside and out. Text accompanying each project sets out the major challenges and issues that influenced the design – along with a site plan and/or a plan of the ground floor. As a bonus, a number of the projects also include dimensioned drawings of some of the key architectural elements. (One of the volume’s few frustrations is that there are no plans included for upper floors.)

But this is far more than a coffee-table book. It serves as a veritable encyclopedia and study collection of period-style architecture for practicing architects, interior designers and clients looking to build a new home. It provides splendid proof that historically inspired design can be made brilliantly contemporary – without doing violence to the canons of traditional architecture.
BOOK REVIEW

Recognizing the Limits

_The Vintage House: A Guide to Successful Renovations and Additions_

by Mark Alan Hewitt and Gordon Bock
304 pages; hardcover; over 180 color photographs; $49.95

Reviewed by Nicole V. Gagné

The words “renovation” and “addition” usually cause a pang of icy fear to grip the hearts of people who love and care about vintage architecture. That sort of talk usually raises the specter of inappropriate changes, repairs and add-ons – the all-too-common fate of old houses whose owners neither understand nor respect their unique character and cultural history. Such homeowners are also the frequent prey of quick-buck contractors and architects whose interest in an old house begins and ends with the bottom line.

So Mark Alan Hewitt and Gordon Bock’s new book, _The Vintage House: A Guide to Successful Renovations and Additions_, comes as a welcome relief, as it fills a special need: How best to help the owners of old houses, who need to make expansions and repairs but who also cherish the special beauty and atmosphere of their homes.

The book’s success at that purpose is due to its special convergence of talent and expertise. Hewitt is an architectural historian and preservation architect who has taught at The University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University and written such books as _The Architect and the American Country House_ and _Gustav Stickley’s Craftsman Farms_. Bock is the former editor of _Old House Journal_, he has written for numerous other architectural publications and books as well, and is an adjunct instructor of historic preservation at Drew University. Hewitt and Bock not only know what they’re talking about, but they also know how to talk about it so the homeowner can follow them every step of the way. For this reason alone, their book is invaluable. Although they have filled _The Vintage House_ with wonderful color photos and illuminating black-and-white drawings, Hewitt and Bock have set their sights far beyond the coffee table. It’s a true rarity: a beautifully illustrated, well made, reasonably priced hardcover that’s really an effective how-to book (with some where-to thrown in).

Conserving Vintage Houses,” the first chapter, describes the authors’ emphasis on “quality homes from the great eras of the American house: the late Colonial-Federal period, the Victorian age, the progressive era of the early-twentieth century, and the suburban boom of the mid-twentieth century.” In “How Do Houses Grow?,” they examine “organic” growth patterns in traditional and vernacular dwellings and discuss the formal and aesthetic principles underlying their design and construction.

Chapters three through six focus on issues of design. “Understanding What You Have” helps with just that, enabling homeowners to situate their design style and look into how it was made and how to assess its materials and conditions, from roof to foundation. “New Spaces in Old Places” looks at the revision of inner spaces, not only the familiar questions of replacing windows and bathrooms and kitchens to suit the demands of contemporary life, but also changes to play rooms, guest rooms and dining rooms. Also considered is the perennial issue of improving the house’s flow of traffic.

“Additions That Stay in Tune,” is where you really appreciate the book’s photographs — to see so many thoughtful and even invisible additions to vintage structures gives one hope for the future. The essential matters of heating, ventilation and air conditioning are examined in “Blowing Hot and Cold.” Of special interest to many will be the commentary on the environmental and economic advantages of geothermal heating.

The last four chapters create a wider context for the homeowner. “Facing the Neighborhood” looks at streetscapes considerations and offers a special account of townhouse expansions. “Outstanding Outbuildings” take us out of the home altogether, and discusses such beloved amenities as garages, swimming pools and stables. In “The Real Deal,” the authors go through the full spectrum of old-house materials, including roofing, cladding and windows; here they teach readers how to recognize what work they need as well as how that work’s being done. The last chapter, “The Long View,” deals with growing environmental awareness and the rise of New Urbanism. A lavish appendix, “Resources for Vintage House Owners,” is another huge benefit of this book. Contact info is given for the architects featured in its pages, along with rock-solid sources for an array of old-house needs, including bath fixtures, ceramic tile, windows, doors, heating, hardware, roofing and air conditioning.

Hewitt and Bock have demystified a subject that has ordinarily stymied too many homeowners. But they do it without oversimplification or exaggeration, always aiming for the most practical information for their readers. They also do it with a sense of mission that is entirely appropriate to their field, and expressed most eloquently in the thoughtful conclusion of “The Long View”: “By caring for our own homes, and increasing our respect and understanding of the importance of historic houses, we recognize the limits of our ability to manage the natural and human-made biosphere. We are designing with history in mind, and respecting the role that our ancestors had in creating our whole environment. In this way we are true to our own nature as well as that of the world around us.”
Do You Speak Classical?
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Presented by Brent Hull, head of the Brent Hull Companies and a leading expert in traditional residential design and historic millwork in particular, this 60-minute presentation is a guide to the basics of classical interior design. Using as examples the famed Georgian and Federal-style rooms of Winterthur, Henry Francis du Pont's mansion turned glorious house museum, Hull offers inspiring lessons in the unique orderliness, inventiveness, and creativity behind the design of the traditional American room.

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Learning Objectives: After the session, participants will be able to do the following.

- Describe and differentiate between and among Georgian, Federal, and Colonial Revival millwork.
- Design more historically accurate moldings, mantels, doors, and millwork.
- Explain how changing values and production capabilities altered architectural detailing over time.
- Compare and contrast different orders, moldings, and arrangement of architectural millwork in American interiors.

Presenter: Brent Hull, founder and owner, the Brent Hull Companies, Forth Worth, Texas

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The Noble Wall Base

By Gregory F. Shue

The wall base is one of the most common elements in period homes of all styles. Its primary functions include the beautification of the intersection of wall and floor, and the protection of the wall from damage due to traffic, dirt and moisture. However, this important piece of the trim package is often overlooked due to its location, its concealment behind furnishings, and its modest presence compared to ceiling crowns, door surrounds and cabinetry. Nonetheless, many design considerations lead to the final sizes and shapes of wall bases. For example, a well-designed wall base works well with the other pieces of millwork in the room. One house may have many kinds of wall bases, made of different materials, especially in period homes, where room sizes and uses can vary greatly throughout.

In traditional houses, the wall base is but one component in an often complicated trim program. It must resolve with trim around doors and windows, cabinetry, fireplace surrounds and anything else attached to walls that comes in contact with the floor. The importance of the wall base should not be taken lightly, for many parts of a house rely on its well-considered design. For example, the projection of a wall base from its wall is a period detail subtlety, but one that can be very important, especially at doors and other openings. Sometimes a plinth block is used as a transition element between a wall base and an adjacent door casing. In other places, the wall base and door casing are designed to interact without the use of a plinth block.

Another period design subtlety, depending on the room style, of course, is the incorporation of small steps, or offsets, in the wall base. I like to incorporate an offset four inches above the floor, providing visual consistency when transitioning to cabinetry but still tall enough to incorporate electrical outlets (oriented horizontally) near the floor. Another period detail is the omission of the toe mold (the small piece adjacent to the floor) when the room is carpeted, in which case the carpet goes under the wall base in a small gap left between the bottom of the wall base and the floor. In fact, in older homes, the presence of a toe mold in a carpeted room might be an indicator that the carpet was installed on hardwood flooring. At the top of the wall base, the wall base cap is one of those small pieces of trim that can be a real joy to design. The variations are endless, and it’s a great way to subtly build the continuity of a room’s style.

In many newer homes, the wall base has been determined by the dimensions of stock lumber or whatever can be found at the closest big box hardware store, which seldom produces a period look. When considering the appropriate size and shape for a wall base, it’s important to remember that it should be proportionate to the room as a whole. As mentioned earlier, it not only conceals the wall/floor joint, but it is also a decorative element. The Classical prescription is that it should be proportioned as the base of a canonical pedestal. While most rooms do not have columns, many have ceiling crowns and wall bases. Other dimensional considerations come into play as well, including the incorporation of electrical outlets, HVAC components, etc.

Although wood is the most common material for wall bases in period homes, they can be made from virtually any material. With wood, wall bases can be stained or painted (or a combination thereof) based on the character of the room. While wood is not very resilient, it is relatively inexpensive, available in stock shapes, easy to customize and very easy to repair when damaged. In rooms exposed to wide temperature and humidity variations, however, wood has a tendency to bow, cup, crock and twist.

Tile is another great wall base material for period homes. Its resilience against dirt and moisture make it a great choice for rooms with wet areas. Ideally, the carefully planned tile wall base resolves with cabinetry and other room components, and is carefully selected for its appropriateness for indoor or outdoor (or both) uses. Tile wall bases, while more resilient than wood, are still fairly simple to repair, available at many price points, come in an endless array of stock colors and shapes and can be custom-designed if necessary, although that can get quite expensive.

Stone wall bases are typically more durable than both wood and tile and immediately heighten the style of a room. They are also a great way to create continuity with other stone elements, such as fireplace surrounds, column bases and floor patterns. While stone comes in a spectacular array of colors and patterns and is very durable, it is heavy, difficult to repair, and custom shapes add to its already greater expense.

As the reader might imagine, variations in the designs of wall bases are as numerous as variations in Classical detail. The proportions and the purposes of rooms usually determine the size and shape of their wall bases. While cost can become an issue with some of the more extravagant wall bases, so many traditional options are at the designer’s fingertips that often more than one appropriate solution is easily available. While wall bases go widely under-appreciated, the consideration of the minutiae is rewarding when the design all comes together — beautifully and intentionally.

Gregory F. Shue is a principal at Shue Design Associates on Sullivan’s Island, near Charleston, SC, and a fellow of the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art. He has studied traditional architecture throughout the U.S. and Europe for nearly 20 years.
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