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**Riverside Renewal**
Historical Concepts designs a gracious Greek Revival home for a historic Lowcountry estate.

**Reinventing History**
A Chicago Beaux Arts beauty is restored in the Windy City.

**Bridging Old and New**
Restored to its former glory, a rustic cabin links a modern English country-style home to the American past.

**Grand Hotel**
An original McKim, Mead & White bank building transforms into a luxury hotel.

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INDUSTRY NEWS

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Working History and its Application to Design, Materials, and Interventions: Springfield Ranch, Tallgrass Prairies National Park

Meg Kindelin is the president and owner of JLK Architects, a firm in Chicago, Illinois. She has over 20 years of experience in all phases of architecture and design and is a specialist in historic preservation architecture. Current projects include preservation services for the $70M rehabilitation of the Shipper and Block Department Store as OSF Healthcare Headquarters, master planning for the reuse of the University of Illinois Libraries, the restoration of the 1931 Battledeck House, and preservation research and architecture for numerous railroad bridges and transit stations in Chicago.

Meg outlines her strategy in the webinar for guiding contracted restoration work and will share how understanding the cultural life of the ranch navigated the stakeholder team for decision-making regarding repairs and rehabilitation of the main house on this important National Register site, with a period of significance dating to 1881.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Introducing the concept of “Working History” of the Tallgrass Prairies site, participants will explore how to compile and work with this kind of historical documentation, and how it guides the design and construction team on the decision-making of restoration projects.
- Define how a Period of Significance is derived, and how to apply this knowledge to the identification, treatment, and interpretation of extant historic materials.
- Make informed decisions on the replication, repair, or retrofit of fixtures and materials based on ethnographic research.
- Prioritize the application of the Working History and the Period of Significance to make decisions on the sympathetic retrofit of the structure for the Americans with Disabilities Act, Architectural Barriers Act, thermal upgrades, and other energy-saving measures.

Visit TraditionalBuildingShow.com to experience our On-Demand series and earn AIA HSW Learning Units.

Design Unveiled for New Federal Courthouse in Huntsville

Fentress Architects and the U.S. General Services Administration recently unveiled design renderings for the new federal courthouse in Huntsville, Alabama, in partnership with the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama.

Soon to be a prominent feature in Huntsville’s historic downtown, the three-story courthouse with a walkout basement will include five courtrooms and six judges’ chambers, as well as workspace for the U.S. Marshals Service, the U.S. Attorney’s Office, and the U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services.

The new courthouse’s design is neoclassical in style, with a large pedimented entry portico flanked by gently arcing symmetrical wings. The design incorporates modern security, sustainability, and technological features necessary for a 21st-century federal courthouse, while integrating classical organizational, proportional, and design elements. In addition, the design features a large formal public lawn with symmetrical plantings that will help both to create a sense of space and to focus the eye towards nearby panoramic views.

“GSA is excited to give the people of Huntsville a glimpse into what their future downtown will look like through this courthouse design,” says Kevin Kems, Regional Commissioner for GSA’s Public Buildings Service Southeast Sunbelt Region. “GSA strives to provide a state-of-the-art facility that meets the long-term workspace and security needs of our partners in the Northern District of Alabama.”

With an authorized budget of nearly $86 million, construction of the 123,000 square-foot courthouse is anticipated to begin in early 2022 and will take approximately 30 months to complete. The 5-acre property sits at the intersection of Lowe Avenue and Gallatin Street. Steve White of Fentress Architects in Washington, D.C., is the project’s lead designer, and Lee Sims of Studio Scarab Architecture Interiors Planning in Montgomery, Alabama, serves as the courthouse designer. Payne Design Group Architects of Montgomery is providing bridging architectural services. To learn more, please visit: fentressarchitects.com

Richard Driehaus 1942 - 2021

A devoted philanthropist, Richard Driehaus established his eponymous foundation in 1983. He saw philanthropy as a form of inquiry, and a way of learning about the world. Reflecting on nearly two decades, he wrote, “I have devoted my professional life to the field of financial management and have been blessed with remarkable success. I recognize, however, that the measure of one’s personal holdings is of less importance than the impact of our collective aspirations made real. I have further come to understand that maximizing the impact of donated dollars can be considerably more challenging than earning those dollars in the first place.”

“Richard was a dear friend, my professional mentor, and a lifelong philanthropist,” says executive director of the Driehaus Foundation Anne Lazar. “He spent decades making an impact in Chicago and his legacy will live on through his foundation. He was a true gentleman of grace and humility, and it is the Foundation’s honor and privilege to continue Richard’s legacy of support.”

Philanthropy enriched Richard’s life immeasurably, and he would often paraphrase Winston Churchill’s quote: “We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.”
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Philadelphia-based interior designer

Barbara Eberlein loves connections—in art, history, design, and people. For the past three decades, Eberlein has curated a career infusing these overlaps into design. She’s traveled the world gathering inspiration to create memorable interiors in spaces contemporary and historical, and she’s been at the forefront of historical preservation and restoration. As a designer, Eberlein’s projects incorporate her passion for the juxtaposition of arts, craftsmanship, contemporary design, and historical integrity. This preternatural ability to intuit the connections of history and design has cemented Eberlein’s presence in the world of interior design.

As a board member of both the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art and the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, Eberlein fuses both sides of her personality—the academic and the practical, the creator and the protector, the contemporary and the historical. She is the host of ICAA Visits: Ardrossan, a virtual guided tour of the historic Main Line mansion made into the silver screen icon in The Philadelphia Story. Eberlein is a big promoter of ICAA’s “In Your Neighborhood,” the short video series where ICAA members take us on a personal walking tour to introduce expressive examples of the design and architecture of their hometown. She is also part of a task force developing a curriculum on the history of interior design and its interaction with architecture.

1 You grew up in Cleveland. Have you always wanted to work in interiors?

I was a fashion groupie. I designed and made all my clothes which, just like interior design, is all about 2D/3D

Philadelphia Story

Interior design Barbara Eberlein incorporates her passion for contemporary design and historical integrity into her projects.
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construction, knowledge of materials, and understanding how things are created. It was also a great background for understanding aesthetics—analyzing what looks good and why. I was completely obsessed with color, pattern, texture, movement, proportion, rhythm, and details. So effectively, this had everything to do with my later fascination enthusiasm for interior design.

2 Before embarking on interior architecture and design, you studied ancient history and religion at the University of Chicago and did archaeological field work. Tell us about that.

“[As an undergrad] I did a program in archaeology with a professor at Yale who had discovered the first sunken ship dating from the 5th C. BCE in Greece. We were invited to map the
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excavation for the Greek Archaeological Service. I thought, ‘This is fantastic! Analyzing the clues to determine what you were looking at, how an object was made and used, and understanding its significance in its culture. Interior design, especially historic restoration, follows a similar thought process of exploration, imagination and interpretation. It encourages you to dig deep, look closer, challenge your own assumptions and imagine all the options.

3 Following your post-graduate work, you moved to Philadelphia and dove into the world of interior design. You embrace new design and historic preservation equally. How do you do it?

Professionally, I love being involved at both ends of the spectrum. I want the ‘brain balance’ of being an artist and a scientist; I want to do new classical work and restoration. My goal is to preserve the very best elements of every space and then adapt and amplify the rest, so the structure continues as a viable and vital environment. The future of a house is ensured if it makes a significant statement about its value and relevance both now and for successive generations.

4 Tell us about your contemporary work.

I’m intrigued by how light, color, texture, and balance all work together to create a certain mood. I find working with contemporary materials so interesting because of the endless variations of unexpected and novel juxtapositions. I asked myself, for example, what I can do with a material that didn’t even exist 200 years ago. It’s vital to keep an open mind and expand the aesthetic opportunities rather than follow a narrow set of prescriptive rules. With a free creative, thought process, I take elements that have very contemporary lines and infuse them with sumptuous materials which enrich contemporary interiors.

5 What is it like working on a historical property?

Like archaeology, you must approach restoration with reverence. Always balancing a building’s past and its future, I focus on capturing its spirit as well as its key architectural details. Once the “fabric” of the building is sound, I reinforce its aesthetic impact with materials, furnishings and collections that add enriching layers to the composition. Even though you’re working in a robust building, you must have a light touch, a gentle hand. As with conservation of art and antiques, we preserve its authenticity and make our new interventions reversible so that if, in the future, new information is revealed, the restoration can be adapted to reflect this. Be knowledgeable about what’s there, respectful of the process, and interactive with the client.

6 How do you feel about new classical work?

It’s wonderful to create new classical work that celebrates historical precedents while incorporating an individual point of view and unique sensibility. Quite honestly, I do the same thing in my contemporary work, just using a different palette. Ultimately, the creative process follows the same path through exploration, discovery, and expression. I still do archaeology—archaeology of buildings. And buildings, just like people, should enjoy a long and happy life with caring and connection.
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If these qualities are important, using
antique flooring is well worth the chal-
lenges of purchasing and installing it.
“The first thing you notice is the rich
patina, which took nature hundreds of
years to create,” says Tom Campbell of
Old Wood Workshop, which specializes
in supplying 18th- and early 19th-century
flooring. “...also subtle variations of color,
the texture and contour of the surface
due to foot wear or saw marks, the
taper of the board from end to end, even
defects such as leather or tin patches—all
of these nuances create a unique and
beautiful floor.”
Campbell sells flooring in batches,
just as it was salvaged from historic
homes or barns, to re-create a truly
authentic look. Like most suppliers in his
business, he still occasionally salvages
a floor himself but relies on demoli-
tion contractors or pickers throughout
the eastern seaboard to help source his
materials. Campbell is always on the
lookout for extremely rare, very wide
boards—up to 24 inches—and focuses on
buying materials that are circa mid-1800s
and earlier. His flooring batches are
cleaned and de-nailed. Occasionally, he
will strip paint or do some repair work
on a batch but he usually leaves milling
to the contractor.
Original antique flooring requires a
lengthy process to make it install-ready.
Floors must be salvaged, handled, and
**LEFT** Old Wood Workshop supplied at least five batches of antique flooring for this 1670 farmhouse in Rhode Island being lovingly restored by the homeowners.

**RIGHT** Short but very wide (16”+) antique white pine planks were used to start the floor layout. Some of the best boards in a batch can be the shorter ones and should be used in prominent locations during the installation process.

**BOTTOM** Characteristics of original surface antique floors include raised knots, which are harder than the surrounding wood and do not wear as quickly over centuries of being walked on.

stored with care to prevent damage, then measured and inventoried, cleaned and de-nailed, and stickered to sit over time or kiln dried to remove moisture. Only then can the material be milled to specifications. Installation can be a challenge since board dimensions (including thickness) and variation in color are not uniform. It requires a careful eye and experience. Campbell does not do installation work, but he offers advice and can recommend professionals in New England.

Bob Friedman of Chestnut Woodworking and Antique Flooring Co. has been supplying and installing antique floors since the 1980s. His customers are attracted to the beauty of a vintage floor. Unfortunately, antique barns and homes are a limited resource, rapidly disappearing from our landscape. “New wood doesn’t come close to the old-growth material, but it’s getting harder to source antique lumber,” says Friedman. “I travel from Tennessee to Canada to find it. These days I have to go farther and pay more for it.”

Every floor is a custom job for Friedman. He works closely with his clients to meet their needs. Once the boards are milled to a job’s specs and installed, finishes can include wax, oil, light stains, and additional hand planing or brushing surfaces. Friedman might have to combine several flooring batches of the same species to create a single order of large dimensions, since antique homes did not have 5,000-square-foot areas. “There are minor variations of color but customers really like the look of it,” he says. “That’s part of the beauty of antique flooring.”

Chestnut Specialists in Plymouth, Connecticut, also supplies reclaimed building materials. “Our main activity is repurposing reclaimed boards for flooring,” says owner David Wasley. Most of his flooring is remilled from antique lumber to a smooth and uniform width, but he can also supply flooring that
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This copper fish was created by Old Wood Workshop owner Thomas Campbell to replicate a decorative antique patch. After seeing many such “Dutchmen” made of tin, copper and leather in antique floors over the years, he thought this design appropriate, considering the house’s proximity to the water.
preserves an original worn surface and edges. “Besides its natural beauty, we are reclaiming and recycling, so antique wood is a green building product,” he says.

According to Wasley, it takes about a dozen steps from salvage to installation. “It’s very time consuming and labor intensive.” He points out potential installation issues: “Although we mill to uniform widths, we are using a limited resource. Compared to conventional boards, dimensions might not be what contractors are used to because we try to cut down on waste.”

Wasley advises making sure the installation crew knows exactly what the customer wants. “You don’t want the finishing guys to sand it smooth and level if the customer wants the original rough surface. If you are using a finish on a floor, you need to test it on side pieces to see what it looks like. A lot of original surfaces are conducive to leaving as is.”

“The antique building materials business has drastically changed from dismantling colonial and other era buildings for reconstruction or restoration to simply utilizing the ‘heart and soul’ components in remodeling or new construction projects,” says Glenn Pianka of Olde New England Salvage. Pianka has been salvaging and selling antique materials since 1982. “The best wide-board flooring usually comes from the attic of colonial-era homes due to their limited abuse. Then the second floor, for the same reasons, although this is where you may find that the boards have been painted.” A recent salvage project he undertook in New Hampshire produced 950 square feet of 13 to 16-inch wide hard pine, mostly in the 14 to 16-foot length. “Most of those boards never had a nail put through them yet they remained ‘flat as a board.’” This find is rare these days, he says.

“The choice to use authentic-surface period flooring versus re-sawn stock is a combined analysis of the client, architect/designer, and a competent contractor to bring a vision to reality,” says Pianka. “I personally have not ever heard of anyone who chose antique flooring say that they wished they had selected another option.”
What you need to know when restoring metal windows.

Windows are the eyes to the world for buildings, and in historic buildings, they are considered character-defining. As with approaching any element of an historic building, one must assess the approaches of replace versus restore. This decision must consider all factors, such as capital cost, differential durability, maintenance costs, operating costs, ease of maintenance and repair, ease of operation, retention of historic materials, reversibility of interventions considered, historic appearance, carbon footprint, avoided impact, and landfill diversion. (All these factors are discussed at length in the Lincoln Hall Window Study available on the www.parks.ca.gov website, along with comparison data, albeit for wood windows.) The ultimate decision will be made based on the weighting of all the criteria. If the only factor considered is capital cost, depending on level of deterioration, and quality of replacement, restoration may not be competitive. But for all other factors, restoration will provide an equal or better scoring of all criteria.

HISTORY OF METAL WINDOWS

English blacksmiths produced wrought iron windows as early as the 13th century. Due to the early limitations of glass production, quarries (small panes of squares or diamonds) made from horn, alabaster, thin marble, or glass were mounted in lead camees. Toward the mid-17th century, cast iron was developed, and window frames, mullions and muntins could emulate the more elaborate profiles of carved wood windows. The invention of the Bessemer converter in 1856 made rolled steel available, which was used starting in the 1890s in the United States for industrial windows. The new rolled T-shapes provided thin profiles for large openings and made direct application of glass to the frames possible. While steel windows started out following the operation of wood windows, such as casement and double hung windows, manufacturers eventually started taking advantage of the strong thin profiles to develop projecting windows, center pivot, and hopper types.

Several different metal compositions are used: cast iron (an iron alloyed with 2% to 4% carbon along with trace amounts of silicon, manganese and other elements) which is cast into molds, wrought iron (iron with 1 to 2% of added slag) which is drawn out, heated, and worked in several cycles, rolled steel (98% iron 1% Manganese, with other minerals) which is rolled out into shapes and bronze (a mixture of copper with 12% tin). To determine the composition without testing, start with a magnet, which will attract to high iron content cast and wrought metal, but not to bronze. To differentiate between cast and wrought iron, note that cast iron has seams (perhaps not easily detected) with intricate detail and hollow shapes, while wrought iron is solid, has smaller members, frequently has tool marks, and may have tiny inconsistencies between elements. It further should be noted that wrought iron is stronger and more malleable than...
cast iron, but cast iron is harder and more able to resist deformation under pressure (carry weight), despite its brittleness. By visual observation, any ferrous metals will show reddish oxidation of the iron content (rust) over time. Bronze is identifiable by its greenish oxidation, which likely extends to material below the frame. (For more information on bronze, see the Traditional Building June 2019 issue.)

APPROACHING THE PROJECT
Assuming the decision is made to restore the existing windows, it is important to perform a survey. A larger project warrants hiring a professional to document the windows by numbering them on elevations of the building, and then charting the type, size, and condition of the glass, presence or absence, and types of hardware, and frame condition in a spreadsheet. Documenting the frame includes checking the putty and sealant, operability, condition of the paint finish, presence of corrosion, loss of section, warping or bowing, and anchorages. The drawings and spreadsheet should explain exactly how many and what kind of windows will be restored, the level of preparation required, how much of the glass or hardware needs replacement etc. The window numbering needs to be transferred onto the windows with a permanent marker on waterproof tape, or similar. Since openings vary in dimension, and can be out of square, if sashes or frames are removed, they must be returned to the same openings.

An aspect of window restoration that should not be overlooked is the potential for hazardous materials. Older windows are likely to have lead-based paint, and/or putty that could contain asbestos. The substrates should be tested to determine what abatement will be necessary, prior to bidding, or any work on the windows. (For more information on dealing with hazardous materials, refer to Traditional Building’s April 2020 issue.)

Once survey documents are complete, they can be circulated to several qualified contractors with sufficient experience and reputation in the type of window project at hand (material, size, style, and operation). An historic building is not an appropriate vehicle to chance inexperienced contractors. Referrals from trusted colleagues can locate suitable candidats, but if that is not possible, the Window Preservation Alliance (windowpreservationalliance.org) has a list of contractors that can be sorted by state, as a starting point. While WPA does not endorse any company, their list provides a selection that can be contacted to solicit references. By checking these references, a short list of qualified contractors can be assembled. With a select list of three or four contractors equally vetted and issued survey documents, the pricing will be competitive, and qualified.

TYPES OF DETERIORATION
With all types of metal windows, corrosion is the typical cause of warped, jammed or failing frames. The oxidation of bronze results in solubilized copper being deposited on the adjacent substrate below the building and is not typically a problem. Oxidation of ferrous metals, by contrast, expands six times the original volume of the substrate and this phenomenon results in several subsequent problems. Loss of paint film is the initial tell-tale sign of initial corrosion. A raised finish and pitting are considered heavy corrosion. Sometimes heavy corrosion of a frame mounted securely to an immovable substrate will cause bowing and warping of the frame or sash. The worst case is corrosion progressing to the point where there is delamination, section loss, or portions of the frame are missing.

Where there is only paint loss, the window can be restored in situ. Microabrasive cleaning can be used safely to remove paint if the adjacent surfaces are protected. Other, more aggressive options are power tool grinding and chemical stripper, if done by a professional. Chemicals have a host of concerns, such as the type of chemical, cleaning of substrate after application, voids in which the chemical can hide, and adjacent materials, which can be negatively impacted. Once cleaned down to bare metal, immediately prime the substrate, as oxidation can form in hours.

Where the finish is raised and the surface is pitted, it is still possible to repair the frames in-situ, but heavily corroded sashes may be easier to remove to a shop for cleaning and repair. Once the metal is completely bare, patch any of the members with a metal putty immediately, followed by priming the surfaces, to prevent rust that can occur within hours.

Where advanced corrosion exists, it may be necessary to remove the windows from the opening to repair missing elements. Since steel windows are strong, they could have been installed in the opening as the building was being erected. This could make removal difficult since the frame could be engaged in the masonry. Where parts of steel window frames are missing, new sections of the same metal can be brazed into the original profile, or welding can be used, followed by grinding to return the profile back to its original configuration.

Warped or bowed frames can be straightened out either in-situ, or more easily, in the shop, using clamps, vises, a ratchet-type tension device, and heat. Typically, due to metal ‘memory’, the straightening may require over correcting the bow or warp, so that it when it cools and relaxes, it ends up straight.

For a lasting finish, an industrial coating system should be used. The paint selection must align to the anticipated methodology of in situ or shop restoration. There are some that work well applied in the field, and some that must be shop-applied but can be touched up in the field. Apply the coating to the mil thickness recommended by the paint supplier. To ensure
The Olin Library was designed by the firm of McKim, Mead & White, built in 1925–27. The steel windows (shown above) were in much needed repair, allowing free ingress of water and air; the brass hardware was tarnished black. You can see how the restoration of the windows brought the library back to life below.

Each layer is consistently applied, specify a tinted primer to start, such as orange that contrasts to the cleaned base metal. The next coat is the tie coat, which should be a contrasting color to the previous coat and to the topcoat, such as pure white. Then the final finish coat is applied in the historically researched color. (If white is the final color, the tie coat can be tinted blue.) With this tinting method, each coat can be inspected when dry, and if there is any visibility of the previous color, the mil thickness was not achieved and can be corrected before proceeding to the next coat.

One of the main reasons that replacement is promoted is the perception that these non-thermally broken metal windows cannot be retrofitted for improved energy efficiency. This is incorrect. There are several small interventions that can be implemented to dramatically decrease air infiltration, which is of greater concern than thermal conductivity for the building’s energy consumption.

The first step is to ensure that the window is sealed. Individual panes of glass should be puttied to seal the joint for air and water. The next step is to ensure that the frame is sealed to the building envelope at the air barrier or vapor barrier of the assembly. Lastly, weatherstrip any operable portions of frame. While compressible foam or other commercial weatherstripping is typically too thick to be accommodated in metal frames, silicon sealant can be used instead. Open the sash, and place bond breaker tape on the operable side. Place a continuous fine bead of silicon to the non-operable side, and almost close the sash so that the silicon is somewhat, but not fully, compressed against the bond breaker tape. Once cured, open the window and remove the tape. Closing the window will compress the bead of sealant to provide an airtight seal.

Another way to improve U-value and reduce air infiltration is to apply a storm. There are many styles now that can be installed interior or exterior, either operating or fixed, which would not significantly impact the historic appearance. An economical option is a seasonal interior friction fit ‘storm’ that can be removed for operating the sash in clement weather, and to easily clean the interstitial space. These are all ‘reversible’ approaches to thermal upgrades. A more intrusive approach is double-glazing the existing frame. It should be noted that typically, the metal frame will be too thin to take the thickness of a traditional hermetically sealed double glazed (HSDG) unit. A vacuum insulated glass (VIG) can be used within the existing frame, although they come with a small seal that looks like a metal button. To use a HSDG unit will require the mullions and muntins to be welded with same-metal extensions to support the glass thickness and provide a ledge for putty. Intervening with the frame depth in this manner is not reversible. Depending on the scale of the window, the impact can be negligible relative to the additional thermal improvement. A mock-up to assess the visual impact should be performed.

There are a lot of small repairs that can be done as well. Hardware can be removed and cleaned of old paint residue and reinstalled, to provide tight closure and prevent drafts. Missing hardware can be sourced and replaced where missing. Where windows are double hung and inoperative, replace the rope or chain. Before replacement, check the pulley over which the rope or chain moves. If it is curved in section, it was designed for ropes; a profile with flat sides and bottom is intended for chain. Incorrectly replacing a rope with a chain will gouge the pulley; vice versa and the rope could slip. Either error would prevent smooth operation.

If the window has been upgraded to higher performance glass, the weight of the sash will have changed. The counter-weight needs to be increased to balance the window frame, making the opening and closing easy.

In summary, restoring metal windows is not a simple task. Hiring qualified professionals for both the project planning and the restoration work will ensure that the windows will endure well into the future.

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A grateful nation will pause on Memorial Day 2021 to honor all veterans. In Milwaukee, everyone is welcome every day to reflect and show their gratitude at a landmark memorial overlooking Lake Michigan.

THE CHALLENGE TO PRESERVE MID-20TH CENTURY MODERNISM
The preservation of mid-20th century modern structures is a growing part of historic preservation in the third decade of the 21st century. Because mid-century modern design was by its very definition an intentional deviation from traditional building, preservation professionals find themselves developing new methods for preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation that often borrow from the wisdom of traditional building practices for application to new materials and technology so that eternal problems like condensation and rust can be solved.

The Milwaukee County War Memorial was designed by Eero Saarinen (1910-1961) and built between 1955-1957. It has become a beloved symbol of veterans’ service and sacrifice to the United States. In addition, it has come to be regarded as an early example of destination architecture in Milwaukee and has continued as such despite the 2001 opening of the Milwaukee Art Museum, designed by Santiago Calatrava (b. 1951). Both buildings, situated near one another, have a view of Lake Michigan.

SAARINEN’S DESIGN INTENT
Saarinen took advantage of the breathtaking view of the lake from a nearby bluff. He installed the birdcage—so named because the stairwell is designed in a steel frame resembling a cage—in a courtyard above a reflecting pool with an eternal flame.

Julie Bastin, P.E. and architect at Milwaukee County Architecture, Engineering and Environmental Services, supervised the birdcage project within a larger rehabilitation of the entire memorial. Russell Drewry, senior associate vice president with HGA, was the project manager.
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Left Severe deterioration, failed wired glass, condensation, heat loss, and paint failure were the challenges that needed to be addressed.

The memorial offers veterans and their families “a quiet place to reflect,” says Bastin, who concurs with Drewry that, with this design, Saarinen pushed the structural capabilities of cantilevered piers to a new threshold. The building appears to float but is actually supported, discretely, by the cantilevered piers. The site, given its proximity to the lake and its harsh winters, is moisture laden. That, combined with minimal heat and insulation, took a particular toll on the design of the birdcage, which is essentially a glass box framed in steel. Furthermore, the roof drains were not well designed initially, says Drewry. Nor did subsequent repairs improve their performance; in fact, they exacerbated the moisture problems. Throughout the memorial and extensively in the birdcage, Saarinen used re-entrant corners, and they contributed to some of the drainage challenges.

 Preservation Problems

The birdcage stair enclosure, featuring 756 glazed openings originally designed with wired glass, suffered from severe condensation that accelerated the decay of the entire steel structure. The challenges were significant: the wired glass was cracked and failing; the severe condensation diminished the performance and aesthetics of the memorial; the steel structure was rusting; and there was significant energy loss that made the stairs cold and unwelcoming for those using them. The steel glazing stops were on the exterior of the structure and the glazing channel was 7/16 of an inch. The building embodied memorial and patriotic values for the people of Milwaukee and the region, and it had been designed by a leading international architect of the 20th century. Was saving it by replacing it really the only option?

 Designing and Implementing the Solution

Like so many projects, getting to the right solution proved to be a combination of who you know and what you know.
Initially, HGA was commissioned to replace the steel curtain wall with aluminum. However, this meant losing one of the primary Saarinen design elements, the birdcage stair. Donna Weiss, founder of Preserve Design Studio, LLC, was the preservation consultant for the project. While HGA was pricing the steel curtain wall replacement and having its engineers assess structural and weight considerations of replacement, Weiss executed a condition assessment, material testing, and cost estimating for a restoration approach. Essential issues to address included the following: determine project scope and pricing; was the reuse of existing glazing pockets possible; the extent of rust; fastener condition; an efficient method for paint and rust removal, and glazing type to increase performance. The restoration budget could not exceed the county's budget allocation for the aluminum replacement option.

Rust was found to be primarily surface corrosion. All frame components could be saved if the new glazing weighed no more than the original, so as not to stress the cantilevered reinforced concrete structure. The search was on for the right glazing. Weiss invited colleague Neal Vogel, principal of Restoric, LLC, in Chicago, to view the project and he suggested they consider Pilkington Spacia, a vacuum insulated glass that would offer an improved R-Value. The glass would be thin enough to fit the existing glazing pockets, saving the cost to redrill thousands of taps and holes to reset the stop placement. At a quarter of an inch, the glazing did not increase the weight beyond what the original cantilevered design could support, a major concern that arose during the project design by HGA and its engineers.

After testing several methods, Weiss specified vapor blasting to clean the steel in a highly targeted manner and prepare it for a high-performance coating that restored the original gray/brown color that Saarinen chose for the birdcage. A remote space heater had been the sole source of heat originally, but during the rehab process, a perimeter hot water panel radiator, made by Runtal, was installed that maintains enough heat to keep the temperature above the dew point. The increased heat, the insulation now achieved with the vacuum insulated glass, and improved roof drains have combined to solve nearly 100 percent of the condensation problem. The cost to restore the birdcage was $850,000 within the $16 million project for work on the entire memorial. The project was completed in under a year and within budget.

Russell Drewry says that conversation between Donna Weiss and Neal Vogel was the critical moment that made this a preservation project rather than a replacement project.

To learn about the Milwaukee D-Day veterans who inspired Saarinen, visit traditionalbuilding.com/projects/birdcage

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For traditional projects in coastal environments, the proper windows, shutters, and doors not only define the design but also provide protection from hurricane-force winds, blistering sunlight, and corrosive ocean salt.

Materials must be durable and shutters must be operable to keep the harsh climate at bay while still looking as though they were made the same way they were when the structure was erected decades or even centuries ago.

Today, there are a variety of functional and aesthetically pleasing products that literally are built to stand the test of time. Here is a selection of companies that specialize in creative coastal solutions.

**AERATIS PORCH PRODUCTS**
AERATIS.COM

Using profiles from 19th-century examples, Aeratis Porch Products manufactures historically accurate, operable, high-density PVC shutters that have stainless steel hardware and tongue-and-groove porch flooring.

The shutters, which come with a lifetime guarantee, are available in louver, raised-panel, combo louver and panel, and Bahama styles.

Chris Tidwell, who created the company’s line of shutters, says the products are durable and resilient enough to stand up to coastal weather.

“They are much more stable, longer lasting and hold paint for much longer than wood shutters,” he says. “In addition, we can offer them at a fraction of the cost—around $350 per pair as opposed to $1,000 for wood counterparts—and our lead time is less than 10 days.”

The company, which was founded in 2005 and is based in Tempe, Arizona, has provided products for a number of prominent places, including the Oak Alley Plantation in Vacherie, Louisiana; This Old House Ideas Houses; and National Register homes around the country.

The company’s products, which also include historically accurate PVC tongue-and-groove porch flooring, are guaranteed not to buckle, cup or warp no matter how hot or cold it gets, making them ideal for coastal installations.

“We try to utilize wisdom from early architects and home builders who did not have high-performance materials,” Tidwell says. “In early American home building, for example, exterior living spaces had tongue-and-groove flooring, which aided in getting water away from the house and into a collection system.”
The deck boards of more modern times, which have gaps and spaces and allow water to penetrate in large volumes and get under the main structure, cause mold mildew and stimulate fungal decay of wood.”

**KOLBE WINDOWS & DOORS**

[KOLBEWINDOWS.COM](http://KOLBEWINDOWS.COM)

Celebrating its 75th anniversary this year, Kolbe Windows & Doors manufactures a variety of customizable windows and doors that lend themselves to traditional and coastal projects.

The Wisconsin-based company’s Ultra Series, for instance, features extruded aluminum exteriors and wood interiors, with numerous options, including exterior trim details and hurricane-impact resistance for coastal areas.

Its Heritage Series, which features wood interiors and exteriors, is designed to create architecturally intricate and historically accurate details. “With numerous divided lite profiles and patterns, aesthetic and efficient glass, hardware options and finishes, it’s easy to create one-of-a-kind openings to suit every region and climate,” says Nick Pesl, displays and product information manager.

Kolbe windows and doors have been installed in residential and commercial projects from coast to coast. The company provided 530 impact windows and 123 doors for Ocean House, a historic beach hotel in Watch Hill, Rhode Island. WaterColor, Florida, used Kolbe’s Ultra Series windows and doors on its 45,000-square-foot beach club on the Gulf of Mexico, and Turks & Caicos Sporting Club, a 1,100-acre private residential community on the island’s southernmost chain, features Kolbe impact products.

“Our windows and doors are designed to marry traditional design aesthetics with new advances in technology,” Pesl says. “Over the years, strict building codes have been implemented in coastal areas to prevent excessive damage during tropical storms and hurricanes. A wide selection of Kolbe products can be upgraded to meet specific needs, including impact resistance in Zone 4 and high-velocity hurricane zones.”
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A manufacturer of custom architectural-grade windows, Graham Architectural Products specializes in historic replications as well as new-construction products.

Its operable, thermally broken aluminum windows, which are manufactured in the 50-year-old company’s 240,000-square-foot warehouse/factory in York, Pennsylvania, include designs for coastal installations.

“We have hurricane-resistant products,” says Jim Eisenbeis, director of marketing. “The construction and available finish of our hurricane-resistant windows, patio, and sliding-glass doors are durable enough to withstand the elements typical in these high-wind areas.”

The company has worked on a number of coastal projects. For The Cigar Factory, an 1881 National Register building in Charleston, South Carolina, that is now home to several businesses, Graham Architectural Products replicated historic windows that meet hurricane-impact requirements. It also manufactured replica windows for the 1928–30 Asbury Park Convention Hall, an exhibition center in the New Jersey city of the same name that is used for ports, concerts, and other special events.

Noting that Graham Architectural Products has manufactured windows for projects in numerous coastal regions that each have their own stringent requirements, Eisenbeis says that the company’s “attention to detail to meet the needs of each project and the quality of the product set us apart. Our motto is: Your vision, our experience.”
Catering to the custom luxury market, Stewart Brannen Millworks offers wood products that are classical in style and modern in performance so they stand the test of wet, windy weather.

Although the family-owned and -operated company does do replications of historic windows, doors and millwork, “we frequently end up merging the two worlds: creating products that meet the high-performance demands of today while paying homage to the details of the past,” says Bradford Stewart, vice president of sales and marketing.

The company, whose 43,000-square-foot factory is in Register, Georgia, manufacturers the wood components in-house and orders glass and hardware from other sources.

“We select hardware that is proven and reliable,” he says. “Hardware that isn’t going to be outdated or discontinued in five years, in case you were to have an issue. We also build in redundancies so that our products don’t rely on things like a custom gasket that must be in perfect order for the unit to perform properly.”

Most of Stewart Brannen’s projects are residential, but the company does have windows, doors and millwork installed in a number of award-winning public projects, including the Florida State University president’s mansion; The Masters House at Augusta National Golf Club in Georgia; the Heritage House at Harbour Town Golf Links in South Carolina; Citrus Square in Sarasota, Florida; and the Wallace House at the Augusta Country Club in Georgia.

“A great deal of our projects are in historic cities in coastal environments, which require impact or at least design-pressure ratings but are still subject to approval by an architectural review board, which must approve the aesthetic details of the products, and finally the engineers who calculate the heat loads for efficiency,” Stewart says. “What you end up with after checking all the boxes is a pretty incredible hybrid.”

He adds that Stewart Brannen’s products are anchored in tradition, not trends. “Things become classics for a reason,” he says. “Quality never goes out of style.”
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Forty miles west of Charleston, set along the banks of the Ashepoo River, this 1,800-acre property dates back to 1697 as a land grant from King Charles II. Here, pond, riverbank, Southern live oak, and loblolly pine mingle with the structural remnants of a plantation past. It’s believed that three homes were built onsite—all succumbed to either fire or natural disaster. Times changed, but the land’s natural beauty persisted.

“When our clients purchased the parcel, the original house had been rebuilt over the years and was small and insignificant compared to the scale of the property,” explains Terry Pylant, senior principal at Historical Concepts, an award-winning architectural firm based in Atlanta. In its place, they wanted a home that expressed their passions for history, art, land conservation, hunting, and exotic collectibles.

“The clients envisioned a home that would draw from the setting’s historic elements, evoking a sense of age but also a feeling of welcome and ease,” summarizes Pylant, who, along with project manager Ryan Yurcaba, collaborated with builder Terry Hoff and interior designer Barbara Westbrook on the intricate project. Construction lasted nearly two years and required the skillful application of both modern techniques and old-world craftsmanship. “From the interior trim carpentry to the floors to the cabinetry, we had some phenomenal artisans working on this project,” notes Pylant.

Today, much of the land is within a conservation easement, protecting it from development and preserving sensitive river habitat for waterfowl. With the easement capping the main home’s size at 5,000 square feet, Pylant’s out-of-the-box response was to separate out sleeping spaces from the living/entertaining areas.
Extending symmetrically off the main home and flanking an ornamental boxwood garden are two detached wings, one containing a gracious master suite and the other two private guest rooms.

“This solution is drawn from the historic forms of working homesteads where kitchens, drying rooms, and carriage structures would have been separate from the main house,” describes Pylant. “It’s a modern house, but we wanted it to tell a story as if it had changed and evolved over time.”

The owners developed a design narrative for their property rooted in the early 1800s, and Pylant contributed to this story by suggesting stately Greek Revival architecture, a favored style of the Antebellum South. A study in symmetry, the main home, reached via a winding oak allée, features a Greek Doric entry portico and roof parapet with delicate fretwork. The zinc roof and Savannah Grey brick are purposeful nods to regional Charleston flavor.

Scale was a vital consideration, notes the design principal. “The house itself is small relative to what you see around it, but its details are large. The front columns are two feet in diameter and stand almost thirteen feet tall. The front windows are four and a half feet wide and...
**BELOW** The entry hall is flooded with natural light, allowing views to the live oaks and gardens beyond.

**OPPOSITE** Loblolly pine beams (harvested on site), along with a robust island, express the kitchen’s rustic charm.
almost ten feet tall. Every custom detail had to fit stylistically and proportionally into the setting,” he adds.

Inside, the main pavilion’s unique layout begins with an 8 by 45 foot picture gallery, which doubles as both an entry vestibule and as wall space for art display. Immediately following is the great hall, which, at 25 by 45 feet in size, is a grand, inviting space for relaxing and formal dining. Dotted with hunting trophies and wildlife artwork, “It’s like a domestic version of a natural history museum,” points out Pylant.

Reclaimed oak trusses in the hall’s vaulted ceiling almost ten feet tall. Every custom detail had to fit stylistically and proportionally into the setting,” he adds.

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Reclaimed oak trusses in the hall’s vaulted ceiling...
Cypress wood recently recovered from the bottom of the original rice ponds has been milled into cabinetry and ceiling panels in the library. The room frames awe-inspiring views through live oaks to the river beyond.
add character but also contribute to the home’s fictional timeline. According to Pylant, “It’s as if at some point in time, the ‘existing’ plaster ceiling had been removed and the timbers exposed to allow more light into the space.”

To the left of the great hall is the kitchen, which tells its own tale of the passage of time. “It’s meant to look like a porch that was enclosed around the 1920s, when electricity and indoor plumbing became available,” notes the designer. The exposed ceiling beams shift orientation to represent the extension of the “porch” off the main roofline. The beams were crafted from loblolly pine harvested onsite and faux painted by noted decorative artist Bob Christian.

In order to keep the kitchen’s look based in the ’20s, the design team nixed upper cabinets and opted for a rustic island with open shelving underneath. William C. Pritchard Co. crafted all of the custom cabinetry and cleverly hid the fridge behind paneling shaped like an ice box. Reclaimed heart pine flooring contributes to the new-old aesthetic.

Another entertaining hub is the storytelling room, a casual, sunlit space off the great hall and of equal width. Here, large steel windows frame views of live oaks and river beyond. “Its design cues stem from the idea that it was originally a veranda,” explains Pylant. Beyond the windows stand full fluted columns: “Because this elevation is visible from the river, the owners wanted a formal river façade,” he explains.

While much of the main pavilion facilitates gathering, Pylant snuck in a variety of private destinations for the owners, the most intriguing of which are his and hers galleries sited at either end of the long entry vestibule. The wife’s West gallery is lined with leaded glass cabinets to display her collections of Japanese art, snow
globes, and various ceramics. Its ceiling, painted by Bob Christian, represents the night sky as it would have appeared on December 28, 1810 (the clients’ anniversary date plus the home’s invented circa year). Over 200 inset LED lights twinkle like stars.

The husband’s East gallery has its own decorative ceiling painted in the style of Audubon, inspired by the couple’s collection of 1800s prints from Birds of America. The artwork is directionally accurate and includes Charleston in the distance. Another quiet space is the library, which is paneled with sinker cypress, recovered from the bottom of the property’s original rice ponds and prized for its rich color.

Inside their master suite, aka the master pavilion, design elements, materials, and furnishings form a Colonial palette, evoking the early 1800s like much of the main home. Meanwhile, the styling of the master bath suggests it was added later in the 1920s or ’30s. The bathroom mass acts as a hyphen connecting the pavilion’s bedroom on one side and walk-in closet on the other. This arrangement suggests that the whole is comprised of converted outbuildings.

From corner to corner, the property is awash in intriguing features, including a restored parterre garden dating back to 1703, when the first home was presumably built. This oasis is just one success story of many—over the years, historic rice pond dikes were rebuilt, fields replanted, roads redone, outbuildings revived. A home befitting the property’s gravitas was always the missing piece.

“The owners have proven themselves respectful stewards of the land,” contends Pylant, “but with this house they’ve established a lasting legacy through design.”
REINVENTING HISTORY
In the Windy City, the Michigan Avenue Bridge is defined by four 1920s architectural icons: Wrigley Building, Tribune Tower, 333 N. Michigan Ave., and the London Guarantee & Accident Building, now part of the LondonHouse Chicago hotel, a new award-winning historic redevelopment.

The cupola-topped hotel, overlooking the Chicago River at North Michigan Avenue and East Wacker Drive, distinguishes itself in the cityscape with a sleek contemporary glass extension that seamlessly blurs the lines between old and new, past and present.

The luxury lifestyle hotel, which was completed in 2016, is a collaboration between the Chicago-based architectural firm Goettsch Partners and Chicago-based developer Oxford Capital Group.

“I’ve always thought it was the prettiest and most beautifully proportioned building in the city,” says developer John Rutledge, founder, president and CEO of Oxford Capital Group and affiliate Oxford Hotels & Resorts, which manages the hotel, as well as trustee board chair of the Chicago Architecture Center. “It really is a Grace Kelly of buildings, which we believe will continue to stand the test of time.”

The structure’s and the city’s history are entwined: It was constructed on the site of Fort Dearborn, which was originally built in 1803 and ultimately destroyed in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Through the years, it served as offices for a variety of well-known companies ranging from the radio station WLS-AM to the publisher Crain’s Communications.

By the time Oxford Capital Group decided to turn it into a hotel-anchored mixed-use building with two floors of retail, it was nearly vacant.

Leonard Koroski, FAIA, LEED AP, a principal of Goettsch Partners, says that “it was a unique opportunity for adaptive reuse and expansion. It has 23 different faces, and the floor plates are irregular, which is not good for offices, but it’s ideal for a hotel because there are 56 different room types so it appeals to various types of users.”

A Chicago Beaux Arts beauty is restored in the Windy City.

BY NANCY A. RUHLING
PHOTOS BY NICHOLAS JAMES PHOTOGRAPHY
(EXCEPT WHERE OTHERWISE NOTED)
As the lobby library illustrates, the contemporary furnishings are opulent, elegant, and striking.

The hotel’s front desk features a black marble floor and back wall whose patterns replicate ornamental features in the original building.

The indoor bar on Floor 21 is one of the amenities of the tri-level rooftop.
The 305,000-square-foot, 21-story limestone Beaux-Arts building, designed by Chicago architect Alfred Alschuler to house the London Guarantee & Accident Co., was restored. Original façade details, including the 6-foot-high, 5,000-pound urns that serve as rooftop finials, were repaired or replicated and remounted. Some 1,100 windows were replaced with energy-efficient replicas, and the building’s HVAC systems were upgraded.

The 85,000-square-foot new tower, which melds with the 1929 Neo-Gothic terra-cotta Mather Tower next door, replaced a street-level surface parking lot.

Adding the tower, says Rutledge, “was like filling in a missing tooth” in the Wacker Drive street wall.

It was, he adds, an aesthetic as well as a financial decision—the 80 additional guest rooms it contains, along with an expanded rooftop and column-free ballroom, were necessary for the redevelopment because “we needed the incremental revenues generated by those additional rooms and spaces to make the investment pencil.”

From the beginning, Rutledge’s vision was of a contemporary component that would complement the existing architecture while satisfying the rules and regulations of local, state, and national preservation groups, which had indicated they didn’t necessarily want the addition to be a replica or updated version of the building’s architecture.

“We wanted something that paid homage to the original building,” he says.

Koroski adds, “We sculpted the two buildings together. Each has a base (floors one through four), a shaft (floors five through 21) and an elaborate top.”

Two types of glass define the new tower’s façade and delineate its distinct uses. On floors one through four, which include the lobby, ballroom, retail stores, and other public rooms, the glass is transparent because “we wanted people to see that there’s activity going on inside,” Koroski says.

The upper floors, where the guest rooms are, are clad in glass that has more reflectivity, he says, “to create a sense of privacy while still giving a better view of the Chicago River.”
KEY SUPPLIERS

ARCHITECT Goettsch Partners
DEVELOPER Oxford Capital Group
INTERIOR DESIGNER Simeone Deary Design Group
OWNER’S REPRESENTATIVE/PROJECT MANAGER Daccord
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER TGRWA
MEP/FP ENGINEER WMA Consulting Engineers
EXTERIOR MASONRY RESTORATION Klein & Hoffman
LIGHTING DESIGNER AKLD Lighting Design
GENERAL CONTRACTOR W.E. O’Neil Construction
CURTAIN WALL MANUFACTURER Schüco
CURTAIN WALL INSTALLER Alliance Glazing Technologies
WINDOW INSTALLER Jensen Window Corp.
WINDOW MANUFACTURER Graham Architectural Products
STONEMASON Mark 1 Restoration
STONE SUPPLIER Galloy & Van Etten
The redevelopment of the hotel, which has 452 guest rooms, allowed the team to design the city’s only tri-level rooftop, whose features include a two-level bar and event space, an indoor bar and an outdoor terrace that has lounge seating and a covered bar.

The original building’s cupola, which offers 360-degree views of the city and is a city icon in its own right, has been turned into additional rooftop space, as well as a venue for private dining and events.

In keeping with the historic theme, the guest room interiors, designed by Simeone Deary Design Group, were inspired by luxury automobiles of the 1920s. Contemporary furnishings with opulent embellishments and lavish upholstery and Art Deco-inspired geometric patterns are used throughout the hotel to reflect the building’s history and make it come alive.

The hotel’s name—LondonHouse Chicago—also is a nod to the past. From the 1950s to the 1970s, the building was home to the world-famous London House jazz club, which featured some of the genre’s greatest performers, including Dinah Washington, Nancy Wilson, and Bobby Short.

LondonHouse Chicago has won a lot of praise and numerous honors, including the 2021 Award of Excellence, Renovation from the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, the 2018 Chicago Landmark Award for Preservation Excellence from the City of Chicago Commission on Chicago Landmarks, the 2017 Historic Redevelopment of the Year Award from the Chicago Commercial Real Estate Awards, and the 2016 Gold Award, Mixed-Use Architecture—Chicago Design Awards.

“The project was extremely gratifying for our entire team,” Rutledge says. “It has been architecturally and financially successful, receiving almost universal accolades.”

Koroski adds that the hotel is “a success on so many levels—historic preservation and stewardship, adaptive reuse with existing architecture and design. And it’s a real magnet. People stand in line to get onto the rooftop.”
Bridging Old and New

Restored to its former glory, a rustic cabin links a modern English country-style home to the American past.

BY JANICE RANDALL ROHLF

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANICE HOACHLANDER OF HOACHLANDER DAVIS PHOTOGRAPHY
“The tail that wagged the dog.” That’s how Barnes Vanze Architects describes a storybook log cabin from the 1800s that was a hair’s breadth away from demolition when firm principal Steve Vanze and his team—Melanie Giordano and Sydney Katz—came to the rescue. “You don’t run into many of these log cabins,” says Vanze. “We knew we had to save it.”

The clients needed little convincing. Neada and Brian Onufrychuk, new to country life in Virginia, were so focused on the five acres of land (“It’s magical,” says Neada), that they hadn’t noticed the squat, chink-walled structure attached to a nondescript 1925 brick house poised for the wrecking ball. As soon as they did, however, they instantly recognized its value. Now her favorite part of the house, the painstakingly restored cabin initially gave her pause, Neada admits. She worried that the rustic cabin might not mesh with the rest of the home, a modern English country house inspired by C.F.A. Voysey, an icon of the English Arts and Crafts movement.

Fortunately, the design and construction challenges fell into the right hands. Along with the homeowners, both history buffs and avid collectors—she of art, he of stamps and antique coins—the classically inclined architects headed up a team consisting of designer Lauren Liess, known for strong sense-of-place interiors, and contractor Michael Carr, whose meticulous craftsmanship included burning and chipping new wood to make it look old. Landscape designer Jennifer Horn introduced a homey “Remnant Garden” outside the cabin along with other landscaping she says is “what we imagine was once on site.” In terms of vision, talent, and integrity, this was a dream collaboration of professionals.

Designed in a meandering fashion, the house is organized around axial views through the house to the woods, with the cabin at one end and a three-bay garage cum upstairs office at the other. Glass hallways set at an angle link...
these two volumes to the house’s central vaulted great room, where the parents enjoy casual living and eating with their two young children. Other spaces—kitchen, bedrooms, formal dining, covered porch, and library—surround the central space and look into it from the main level or hall and balconies above. Open and airy when you walk into the foyer, the mood shifts to cozy once you step into the dark-wood paneled library, and changes again in the kitchen, a sunlit room with a white oak island, white quartz countertops, and floors of light gray slate.

The house looks smaller from the outside than it actually is. Its sweeping roof and the gently curved stucco rolling out over windows and into wooden door openings recall the white roughcast houses with slate roofs typical of Vosey. “Our aim was to reflect his ideas in a cleaner, more modern way,” observes Vanze. “We made the design a little crisper, and added slightly simpler details.” While there is a ribbon of horizontal windows à la Vosey on the front shed dormer, there are also large expanses of glass, especially in the back and in the pedimented portions of the house.

To Naeda’s delight, the house, she says, is shaped like a hug that embraces arriving guests. It’s a welcoming spirit that carries through once you step inside. “The bends and turns of the house create mystery,” she suggests. “It makes you wonder where every little section leads to.” Like the property marked by rolling hills, forest, and a stream, the house is an assemblage of wonderful moments just waiting to happen, the culmination of which is the log cabin.

Originally, the idea was entertained to have the cabin serve as a pool house, sited as it is near the pool and sports court. Once the original low roof was raised, however, the resulting cathedral ceiling gave the space more potential and, newly insulated, it has become a much-used family room as well as the place to have dinner guests at a long table that seats 20 in front of the original fireplace brought back into working order. “We pulled in simple, comfortable furnishings,” says Lauren...
Leiss, adding that she chose “primitive, rustic-feeling materials” for the cabin from which she transitioned to the rest of the home.

“I could see that Neada was drawn to romantic, dramatic spaces that had a bit of quiet soul to them,” says Liess, who incorporated many of the pieces she designed for the Onufrychuks into her most recent custom furnishings line, Woodbridge. “This being a new-build, my goal was to try to bring in some patina.” Elements like a soft, tea-stained palette, tone-on-tone patterns, and vintage and vintage-inspired textiles and rugs create an Old Curiosity Shop-type backdrop that stops short of becoming too heavy-handed. “I wanted it to be a little bit dusty, but not too much,” says Neada, implying that she loves antiques but also appreciates the trappings of other, more modern eras. “I’m all about the old, new, and earthy, mixed with some moody dark moments.”

The wide range of styles she’s drawn to is most apparent in the extensive and eclectic art collection, which she had already begun to amass before Liess encouraged her to keep going. Among the artists displayed in the home are Mary Little, who created the sculpture-like shadow-catching piece above the great room fireplace, and Chelsea Fly, whose atmospheric landscape watercolors flank the doors to the kitchen.

Perhaps the most meaningful piece of art in the home has been part of the property since long before the Onufrychuks moved here. The salvaged original door to the 1800s log cabin now occupies a place of honor on wall space in the main stairway. Much more than an old door, it represents how the preservation of the cabin influenced the architecture and how the past is now linked to the present.

ABOVE A wide aisle between the perimeter counters and island provides enough room for everyone to help with prep or clean-up. The large windows above the prep sink shown here are sure to bring joy and optimism to any chore.

OPPOSITE The existing historic log cabin was lovingly restored making it a comfortable family lounge. During restoration, the cabin received electric service, new doors and windows, and a more open ceiling with wood beam details that tie the cabin aesthetically to the great room of the main house.
The most architecturally significant additions to historic buildings are those that seamlessly merge the best of their time periods yet allow each element to make a distinct statement.

By design, they don’t replicate their architectural past; instead, they use the sophistication and ingenuity of bygone eras as a springboard for creativity and innovation to reflect what went before yet anticipate what is yet to come in a prescient manner.

One of the latest illustrations of this principle is The Fifth Avenue Hotel, which is housed in one of New York City’s architectural gems.

A decade in the making, the hotel is the latest chapter in the landmarked building’s century-long history.

The original five-story McKim, Mead & White building, 250 Fifth Ave. at 28th Street in Manhattan’s chic NoMad neighborhood, was erected in 1907 for the Second National Bank.

In 1913, McKim, Mead & White designed a two-story addition on the north side, and in 1928, the firm also designed a commercial addition on the back of the building.

The fourth—and final—addition is the 230-foot-tall, ground-up building designed by the New York City-based firms Perkins Eastman and PBDW Architects as the premiere project of the hotel development and management company Flâneur Hospitality.

Flâneur Hospitality CEO and Founder Alex Ohebshalom, who is a principal of his family’s property-management company, which oversees a portfolio of more than 2,000 residential apartments and over 1 million square feet of office, industrial and retail space, including 250 Fifth Ave., envisioned the project as a way to honor and build upon the work of McKim, Mead & White.

“They were pioneers and innovators of their time—they traveled extensively through Europe and brought ingenious and audacious design ideas back with them,” he says, adding that his family has owned the building since 1978 and that most recently it was used as commercial and office space. “Like them, I take inspiration from both cultures and masterpieces the world over.”

Stanford White, the “White” of McKim, Mead & White, whom Ohebshalom calls the “quintessential flâneur, or urban wanderer,” was his main inspiration—not only for the hotel but also for the brand of his hospitality development and management company.

“I did a deep dive into Stanford White and unearthed images and news articles of his townhouse in Gramercy Park and his Box Hill estate in St. James on Long Island,” he says. “He had a collection of furniture, objects, and art from his travels that spanned countries, eras, and cultures.”

The Fifth Avenue Hotel project, which started in 2012 with a public hearing before the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, evolved over time.

PBDW Architects—whose consulting partner Samuel White is Stanford White’s great-grandson—was commis-
sioned to explore the possibilities for the Gilded Age building, which was to be restored.

“Right from the beginning, the landmarks commission, which has been very supportive of the project, told us that building on top of the existing structure would not be considered by the Landmarks Preservation Commission,” says Matthew Mueller, AIA, partner at PBDW Architects. “And that if we did build on top of the two-story addition, we would not be able to add more than four or five stories over it.”

After extensive research, however, PBDW Architects discovered a 1911 New York Times article describing a proposal for a “tall loft building” on the site, that nearby firm was at the time housed in a similar building near 250 Fifth Ave., that persuaded the commission to entertain proposals for a higher structure.

Ultimately, the architectural team decided to maintain and preserve the façade of the two-story addition and replace the building behind it with the new tower.

“We also excavated another floor below ground,” says Shawn Basler, AIA, co-CEO and executive director of Perkins Eastman.

Perkins Eastman, which came on board later, and PBDW Architects altered the tower’s design as circumstances changed.

The original buff-colored brick and limestone building, which has a terracotta cornice, was meticulously restored and its wood-frame windows were precisely replicated.

“We built a scaffold around it and let the brick dry out for a year,” says Basler. “And we matched the original mortar color.”

Ohebshalom added that the replacement terra cotta, from Gladding McBean, makes the 155 feet of the cornice look “gorgeous.”

The departure of the largest tenant—coincidentally, it was a bank like the building’s first resident—changed the whole dynamic of the project and how we looked at the building,” Basler says. “It allowed us to create a streetscape and bring back the building’s original two-story banking hall space. It also allowed us to re-think the main entrance so we could add double-height windows with transoms.”

The new brick and metal tower, which steps back from the original building, clearly shows, Mueller says, that “additions can be complementary and contemporary.”

The thistledown color of the new brick, which, after many samples was intentionally chosen to play off the original tone instead of matching it, ties the two structures together.

“We took the proportion and composition of the windows and drew from them for inspiration to hark back to the materiality so the tower can stand on its own,” Mueller says. “But it doesn’t undermine the original building.”

Or, Basler adds, overwhelm it. “The hotel is a unique property—it blends new and old, and it has attention to detail from the interior to the exterior,” he says.

Ohebshalom says The Fifth Avenue Hotel represents “a unique approach to hospitality, one that provides guests the greatest luxury of our time: being present in the moment. The flâneur—one who takes time to observe and enjoy the pleasures of life—is the inspiration behind our philosophy of mindful travel and personal hospitality.”

In keeping with that theme, The Fifth Avenue Hotel is made for luxury living in a grand style. It has 153 rooms—24 in The Mansion, which is the rebranded name of the original building, and 129 in The Tower.

In addition to a 5,000-square-foot ballroom with 22-foot ceilings, there’s a 2,500-square-foot private dining space, a signature multi-level restaurant on Fifth Avenue, a two-story library and study, an outdoor terrace and a fitness center with equipment from Technogym, Peloton, and Mirror.

The interiors, designed by Martin Brudnizki Design Studio, “are meant to evoke the home of a worldly explorer, captured through rich colors, textures, furnishings, and art as well as thoughtful accoutrements and one-of-a-kind finishes,” Ohebshalom says.

Mueller notes that the attention to historic detail and sensibility set The Fifth Avenue Hotel apart.

“Frequently owners care more about the addition than the landmark, but in this case, Alex cherished the landmark and restored it to its rightful glory,” he says. “It’s good for New York, good for the property, and for historic preservation.”

The Fifth Avenue Hotel, which may open as soon as the end of the year, “is a career high point for me,” Ohebshalom says. “We intend to own the property for the next 100 years, and creating The Fifth Avenue Hotel allowed us to optimize the asset while respecting its history and honoring New York City architecture.”
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800-486-0661; 585-924-3860;
Fax: 585-924-9962
www.newenergyworks.com
Farmington, NY 14425
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www.timbercraft.com
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Chadsworth Columns
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www.columns.com
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www.driwood.com
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Goodwin Company
800-336-3118; Fax: 352-466-0608
www.heartpine.com
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Jim Illingworth Millwork
315-232-3433
www.jimillingworthmillwork.com
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